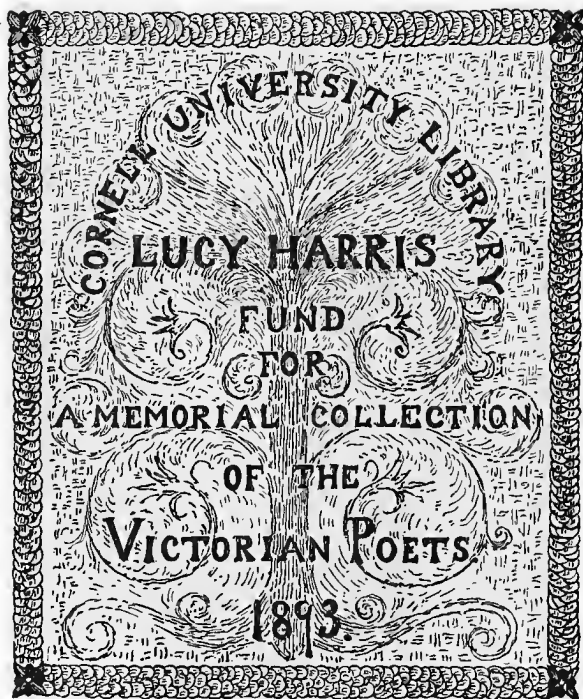


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SONG-BLOOM.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS UPON "LOVE-SONGS".

[For "*Opinions of the Press*" upon Mr. Barlow's other Works, see end of Volume.]

"Mr. Barlow has somehow managed to get his head above the crowd of candidates for poetical fame. He has done it by his persistence and industry; successive volumes of verse have challenged the attention of critics and readers, and by means less lawful,—rebellion against accepted beliefs in religion and morals. Of course, neither persistence nor rebellion would have helped him, without some measure of poetical gifts. . . . His creed, if we may judge from a poem entitled 'Christ and Woman,' seems to be settling down into something like Comtism. But woman, with Mr. Barlow and poets of his school, is necessarily young and beautiful woman.

' Woman we elect
Tender snow-white queen,'

he says; but the woman of the proletariat is not tender and snow-white. For all Mr. Barlow's eloquence, we think that Christ will do, as he has done, more for humanity and woman, as half of humanity, than all these singers of sensuous verse."—*Spectator*.

"In this, his latest volume of poems, Mr. Barlow does more than maintain the high position he has already won as a poet. He is always melodious and never common-place—in short, his verse is poetry in the true sense of the word."—*Whitehall Review*.

"In this volume of 'Love-Songs', as in several others before it, Mr. George Barlow proclaims the worship of the beautiful as the true reli-

gion—sometimes, as in 'Christ and Woman', and 'To Christ', with a defiant irreverence of other beliefs that is repulsive, but almost always with a force, a luxuriance of epithet, and a mastery of form which compel the admiration even of those who most heartily detest his 'cult'. . . . Mr. Barlow is at present as genuine a pagan as ever was Ovid or Horace. The public as well as himself would profit by his conversion."—*Scotsman*.

"Mr. Barlow is rather intellectual than emotional, and, though he does throw feeling into his verse, it is not always suggestive of love and tenderness. He often glances at or dwells upon ideas associated with our religious conceptions and beliefs; but he is very far indeed away from orthodoxy. His boldness is sometimes audacity, and the very vigour of his speech will appal the timid reader; so is it in his odes to Shelley and to Christ, and occasionally in other pieces."—*Queen*.

"Genius, like nature, never repeats itself. Another characteristic of genius is that it always appeals to the immortal. Its highest works, whether of painting or sculpture, or of music or poetry, always bring home to us a feeling of the reality of a higher life. . . . The volume before us, the variety in which is an attractive feature, contains to our thinking much true poetry, and some passages equal to anything previously written by the same author. Two of the poems—'A Death Song' and 'To Keats'—are exquisitely beautiful; and both are full of that acknowledgment of a higher life to which we have referred. In the stanzas addressed to Keats, there are many lines beautiful in their simplicity, and the last verse in the poem entitled 'A Farewell to Poetry' (which, again, is full of a realization of spiritual truths) seems to us perfect. This volume is almost free from that extreme sensuousness of expression and metaphor which has been adversely criticised in some of the author's former works, but which we do not think deserves such severe comments as have been passed upon it."—*Spiritual Notes*.

"A collection of love songs, more serious than amorous. The author shows considerable depth of feeling. He is a lover of Nature in most of her moods. He has no small skill in word-painting, and in his versification is facile and varied."—*Sunday Times*.

POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEORGE BARLOW.

POEMS AND SONNETS. IN THREE PARTS. 1871.

A LIFE'S LOVE. 1873.

UNDER THE DAWN. 1875.

THE TWO MARRIAGES: A DRAMA, IN THREE
ACTS. 1878.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE. 1878.

THE MARRIAGE BEFORE DEATH, AND OTHER
POEMS. 1878.

TIME'S WHISPERINGS: SONNETS AND SONGS.
1880.

LOVE-SONGS. 1880.

SONG-BLOOM.

BY

GEORGE BARLOW,

AUTHOR OF "LOVE-SONGS," "TIME'S WHISPERINGS," "THROUGH
DEATH TO LIFE," ETC., ETC.

LONDON:
REMINGTON AND CO.
134 NEW BOND STREET.

1881.

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DEDICATION.

I sang ten years ago : I sing to-day :

*And through the intervening years my song
Has surged round chiming shores with wavelets strong
And ripples soft of many a passionate lay.*

*Lady, whose sweet kiss through the weary way
Hath helped me, lifted me when morns were long,
Nights dreary,—take these fancies as they throng,
Flowerbuds that chide my hair's unlyric grey.*

*Thou art ever with me , we can see the sun
Now rising on the further side death's stream,
And, perhaps, our larger half of toil is done,
Our larger sorrows suffered,—and our dream
Of perfect love waits burning to be won
Hard by the deep dim waves that closelier gleam.*

August 31, 1880.

TO A LADY WITH DEEP BLACK HAIR.

Wonderful hair
Deep-flowing and rare,
Full of the dreams of the loves of the past,
Than flowers more fair,
Around me thy magical spells are cast.

O sweet sweet tresses,
What far caresses
Wait you in bowers and dells of the land
As on time presses ?
What tenderest touching of love's soft hand ?

Black, deep black,
With never a track
In their deep sweet midst for the moon to follow ;
Ever they lack
The bright sun-beams that in gold deep hollow

Of gold hair hide :
No sun-beam bride
Thou art, O lady ; thy black black hair
Is sweeter than tide
Of gold that lures from his deep hill-lair

Apollo the king
With gold fleet wing,
And forces his lips to bend and to kiss,
And kissing, sing.
Purer are thy black locks than this.

And the scent of the rose
The deep hair throws
From its midst, the subtle unspeakable charm
That in deep hair glows,
Or in sweet white shoulder or rose-sweet arm.

Oh, if the hair
So tenderly fair
Shines, what must the kiss of the soft lips be,
Moulded to snare,
With laughter or soft speech,—wondrous to me !

O black black locks,
As the time-wave rocks
O'er sands and shoals, take this brief song
Which the time-surge mocks
With music of ripples alive and strong.

O wonderful hair
So black, so rare,
So deep, so dark, so splendid a coil
For a woman to wear,
Too splendid a crown for death to soil,

Immortally sweet,
A singer I greet
Your beautiful tangled and twisted mass
That down to the feet
Once tenderly loosened methinks might pass.

Unkissed they abide,—
Not crowned as a bride
Thou art, O lady ; thou art as a queen
Of chaste high pride
Who on throne superb and sedate is seen,

Ruling the land
With soft white hand,—
And wonderful unkissed black dear hair
Twined band upon band,
The sweetest of all things God made fair.

July 27, 1880.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

I.

Fresh flowers of spring,
 New birds on wing,
 The young year's breezes, soft-plumed and divine ;
 New faces fair
 In glad new air,
 The young green tender buds upon the pine ;
 New white tides' jocund race—
 But not the little footstep, not the little face !

II.

The gold hair sleeps
 Amid the deeps
 Of God, amid the arms of angels fair ;
 No more to me

Its purity
Gleams gold across the dazzled morning air ;
Soft footsteps green meads grace,
But not the little footstep, not the little face !

III.

Red roses blow
Now, row on row,
And white dear buds, the likeness of a child ;
And pimpernels
Peep forth in dells,
And o'er the seas the April winds float mild ;
Such gladden every place,
But not the little footstep, not the little face !

IV.

No more, no more,
By hill or shore
The grey eyes laugh, the child-look upward smiles :
Many are fair

In life's new air,
Some with the sweetest love that woe beguiles,
Lips that can sorrow chase—
But not the little footstep, not the little face !

V.

The lanes are sweet
With young girls' feet ;
The roads of late life bloom beneath the tread
Of women-flowers
Who star life's bowers,
Dark-haired, divine, with locks whence sweetness shed
With flowers doth interlace—
Where is the little footstep, where the little face ?

VI.

Dark hair is sweet,
And passion's heat ;
But ah ! the bright glow of the early day
When simple things

On snow-white wings
Gave joys that now fore'er must pass away—
Leaving no trace, no trace,
Where trod the little footstep, laughed the little face !

THE CHILD.

Blue skies, bright, clear,
Another year,
But ah ! the dear dead child :
Another bloom
Has sought the tomb
With pure step undefiled ;
Another flower
In death's dim bower
Has smiled.

The days advance
With flower-bright lance
Of chestnut blossoms piled
Upon the stems

Like diadems ;
The green woods kiss the mild
Soft-kissing breeze ;
The leaping seas
Are wild.

All things aglow
Forget the snow,
The chill of winter's hand ;
With yellow crown,
Weighty, bowed down,
Laburnum clusters stand ;
The new young spring
With flowers doth ring
The land.

One step we hear
Not,—one, this year ;

Ah me, the child ! the child !
One face we miss,
One soft child-kiss,
One mouth that, last year, smiled ;
Roses are red
This year instead
Of red lips of a child.

Lilies are fair
In summer air,
And deep lush grasses green ;
But ah ! the child
Whose gold hair wild
Bright as the sun was seen
Last year, last year,—
A spirit here,
A queen.

Blue are the seas
And pure the breeze,
The old earth unaltered stands ;
It stretches forth
East, south, and north,
And west, unaltered hands ;
But ah, the child ! the child !
Flowerless for us are all the altered lands—
Ah child ! ah dead
Lost dear gold head—
The child ! the child !

THE ITALIAN ORGAN-WOMAN.

O Italian organ-woman
With the dark dark eyes,
What quick dreams rise
Within me as I watch thee !
What thoughts of southern skies !

In a moment, in a gasping
Of the sudden glowing soul,
The blue waves roll
Of the Adriatic, clasping
My feet ; I touch the goal

Of a thousand glowing fancies ;
 The soft Italian air
 Breathes, and the pure dark hair,
Sweet beyond all romances,
 Before mine eyes is fair.

Oh, wonderful old seasons
 Of the wondrous middle age,
 Your passionate billows rage
About me—wars and treasons—
 A strange unfathomed page.

And all because the ringing
 Of one swift organ smote
 My spirit,—and afloat
It went, and heard sweet singing
 In many a gilded boat

In Italy, diviner

Than is the cold sad land

Wherein our chilled feet stand,

Our harps swept by a minor

Love-breeze, a loveless hand.

O Italy, thy tender

And infinite caress

Is worth all stormy stress

That follows, and thy splendour

Makes bitterest death seem less

Than one swift dream-emotion :

Oh, not in England now

I linger, but thought's prow

Cuts through the blue clear ocean

Whose waves thy rowers plough.

And all because thy music,
And thine Italian eyes,
Sent me to bluer skies
O dark-eyed organ-woman
Than these that o'er us rise.

ENGLAND AND PALESTINE.

Not in Jerusalem
 Where many a tall straight stem
 Of august palm-tree by the way-side stands ;
 Not in the olden town
 Where Christ's dear timeless crown
 Was woven, plaited by the Father's hands,
 And by the lips of those
 Far sweeter than the rose
 Kissed,—ere about his brow, majestic, it expands :

Not in that city fair
 Of sultry Eastern air
 Shall for our brows be crowns and garlands spun
 O valiant Western men,

Valiant, but not as then,
When, daily, deeds miraculous were done
The ancient legends say ;
Blind eyes made whole with clay,
And cures unheard of wrought beneath the Eastern sun.

Oh, sweeter is the rose
Here, where the North wind blows
Its flawless petals, bends its pliant stem,
Than Eastern lilies bright
Which maidens cull by night
And weave into a spotless diadem ;
Fairer the rich green grass
Through which our swift feet pass
Than the few stalks which banks of desert-streamlets hem.

O South wind in the pine
Of England be thou mine,
Yea, mine the forests dark of Western shores,

And mine the strenuous crew
Of strong arms labouring through
The white resurgent seas with bent quick oars ;
And mine the balmy lane
Where honey-suckles strain
Their eager tendrils,—mine the creeper round our doors.

A blood-red wondrous crown
Of endless high renown
Was Christ's ; but plait we in our love-lit vales
Soft garlands sweeter far
Than any wreaths that are
Woven beneath the moon that Sinai pales,
Or in Gethsemane,
Or grown in Galilee,
Where many a fisher-prow the quiet lake assails.

O shores and lakes and dells
Of England ! asphodels

And lilies of the East are not so fair
As tender blossoms born
Beneath the breath of morn
Within your folds and nursed by Western air :
Nor are the Eastern maids
Crowned with the dim black braids
As sweet as flowing crowns of sun-kissed golden hair.

O England ! cliffs and downs
And bustling fervent towns
And long grey shores and myriad-manèd sea,
And gardens, close, red-walled,
And mountains weird and bald
And white-plumed torrents tossing o'er the lea
And green sequestered nooks
And pebbly trout-loved brooks—
Give all your glory of soul, ye wild domains, to me !

Crown me not with a hand
Burnt red with sultry sand,
But with the clear palm of an English maid ;
Stars that above us shine,
O'er mountain-ash and pine,
And fluctuant birch and tangled oak-tree's shade
And silvery mute stream,
Mix ye with my fond dream,—
And flowers that flush in spring the English mossy glade.

And English women fair,
Sweet for the Northern air,
Breathed as the English rose and white as high
Lilies that round us stand,
Stretch forth from all the land
Hands lily-white and fragrant ere I die,
And crown the English song
That sweeps in tide-flood strong
Across my eager heart and through my soul doth sigh.

Oh, never yet avail
Our songs that seek the pale
And sun-burnt maidens of the Eastern land ;
That leave the land of pines
For weak low-growing vines :
Never avail the feet that feebly stand
Upon our sounding shores :
Never avail the oars
That shun the utter deep, that strike against the sand.

Grant me the perfect kiss
Of England,—give me this,
O time, O life, O death with down-bowed wings !
I ask this ; nothing more :
One swift scent of the shore
That the blue endless English ocean rings
With ring of sweet white foam ;
One rosebud from my home,
One flower whereto my hand in the death-grapple clings.

One rustling heather-bell,
One tuft of furze to smell;
One woman's mouth, dearer than rose, to kiss ;
One vision, nothing more,
Of limitless wide shore ;
One awful rush of music ; only this :
One breath of the utter sky
Of England ;—then I die
Content, clasped in a wild unfathomable bliss.

One wondrous London day,
To watch the torrent play,
The flood of life, along the murmuring shore
Of endless seething streets ;
One with the heart that beats
In giant pulses through them evermore :
Then let the veil be rent
And let me pass content
The ever-rippling, waiting, yearning, death-stream o'er.

Crowned with my own sweet land,
Her hand within my hand,
Her eyes upon my eyes, her tender gaze
Deeply intent on me,
And all her wind-sweet sea
Laughing as children laugh in primrose-ways ;
Thus would I pass,—nor fear
Lest in a new land drear
I pass beyond the reach of love and flowers and bays.

Where God is, children are,
And sweet love, and the star
Of labour and of hope,—and woman's tread ;
Woman whose tender breath
Fills all the vales of death
Like the far miles of countless rose-scent shed
In the Caucasian vales :
Such death no spirit pales,
For where there lasts a rose, no death-pale soul is dead.

Where love is, death is not ;
Yea, not o'er any spot
Where sweet love treads hath bitter death the power
Not over England's seas,
Nor the immortal breeze,
Nor one white pure imperishable flower
Of English womanhood,
Nor one true bard who stood
True to his love and land through life's fast-flitting hour.

AT A THEATRE-DOOR IN SUMMER.

Children with heather in hand,
Passing along through the Strand,

Where have you been through the day?
In what far meads at play?

Your hands are filled with fern,
And your faces tingle and burn.

Was not the country sweet
And fresh to tired young feet?

Were not the grasses green
And the wonderful skies serene ?

The wonderful miles of sky
That made you on fire to fly ;

That made you long to be birds
Or gambol, like fleet-foot herds

Now you are tired ; your feet
Are weary ; your young hearts beat.

Again from the flowery land
You return to the gas-lit Strand.

And standing at Theatre-door
In July, I watch you pour

Tired, glad, through the street,
With innocent looks and sweet.

And after you come the girls
With wanton and golden curls

Who live on the lusts of the Strand,
Not a few with ringed white hand.:

Perhaps some short years ago,
That girl with the tresses aflow

Went for a country day,
A school-treat, laughing and gay,

Like you, little girl,—who perhaps
May be caught in the town's lewd traps

In a few more years, and follow
That woman whose laugh rings hollow.

O child with the gold gold hair
Will you be caught in the snare ?

May God your steps preserve
That they stumble not thus, nor swerve

From the heather-bell path to-day
You follow with footstep gay !

O gold-haired wonderful child,
With glances laughing and wild,

May you never along the Strand
With other than white child-hand

Filled full of beautiful flowers
Pass, in the passionate hours

Of later life ; may the bloom
Of to-day's joy last till your tomb,

Keeping you tender and good,
O child-face under the hood !

Keeping you gentle and fair,
O angel in soft night-air

Of London passing along,
Not with a sigh but a song !

And are those the tears I see
In the hard set eyes of thee

O Strand-girl, watching the strut
Of the children whose one day out

Has made them richer than queens ;
Eight hours in grassy scenes.

O girl with the face still fair,
Kissed by the soft night-air,

Were you too fragrant as flowers,
In spirit, in long-lost hours ?

Did you carry ferns and heather
Through London in July weather ?

Oh, carry them once again ;
Forget the sin and the pain.

The night-air waits to redeem
Thy spirit : the stars yet beam,

And the heather in front for thee
Shines,—and the moon on the sea.

And flowers as white as thou
Yet shalt be, troubled of brow.

The winds on the hills are sweet ;
The ferns and the golden wheat

And the country glories yet
May be thine ; for thine eyes are wet.

So dreamed I ; watching the throng
Of children, with shout and song

After their country day,
As they crowded the crowded way,

Pressing their soft young curls
In the gowns of wanton girls,

And pushing amid the crowd
Of the night-Strand, boisterous, loud.

I watched them all pass by,
Kissed by the clear night-sky ;

Watched them all till the last
Small baby, slumbering fast,

Wrapped in a tight red shawl,
Was carried by : God bless all.

A HYMN.

I.

Great God of the wide seas, king too of the space
Severing star from gold star, with thy dwelling-place
Far amid the cloud-lands, fold in thine embrace
Hearts whose intense emotion
Like world-wide tides of ocean
Yearneth for thy blessing, panteth for thy grace.

II.

Pure as are the roses, white as is the foam,
Great God of the mountains, through the starry dome
Passing like the night-wind, lift us, waft us, home ;

For we cry with daring,
Suffering souls upbearing,—
Souls that through life's desert, stricken, struggling, roam

III.

Art thou in the heavens? dost thou, high God, care
Nothing for the torment which with winged swift spear
Blood-dyed at the sharp point, doth assail us here?

Are we alone for ever?

Wilt thou redeem us never?

Nor sweep the thunderous dark-hued threatening fierce
skies clear?

IV.

Grant us thy redemption : make us one with thee
In thy rapture-dawn in morning o'er the sea,
In thy passion-calm in sunset's purity ;

Let the strange white cloud-billows

For our souls too as pillows

Gleam forth ; let man victorious o'er outspread nature be.

V.

God, thou art immortal ; burn us with thy flame,
With the awful utter longing that for utter shame
Purifies each effort, cleanses every aim,—

That we may find the death-land

But one divine rose-breath land,

Treading it triumphant, trusting in thy Name.

VI.

Oh, thy flowers are endless ; why should human feet
Vanish, when thou fillest woods with meadow-sweet
Every fresh year gently, for the woods to greet ?

Canst thou not save the nations

Who bring thee heart-oblations

As thou yearly savest, God, the golden wheat ?

VII.

Raise us from our sins, God,—lift us from the tomb ;
Make each woman's soul pure as a rose in bloom ;
In each strong man's spirit every sin consume ;

With sacred selfless love fulfil us ;
With thy sweet spirit's yearning thrill us ;
A sun of hope, divide thou all the wavering gloom.

VIII.

Strengthen us to march on, stedfast day by day,
Brace us, purge us, guide us, guard us, God we pray ;
Through the burning noontide, through the twilight grey,
Be with us, great God, to deliver ;
Fill thou with shafts our spirit's quiver ;
Be thou our brazen buckler in the blind affray.

IX.

Be to us in love-land timely shield and shade ;
As a giant oak-tree watching o'er a glade :
Let thy perfect calm bright passion-land pervade ;
Bend thou above the tender sleep
Of lovers with thy wings that weep
Dewdrops divine above them, ready e'er to aid.

X.

Thou art the spirit of love, God : thou thy love instil ;
With thy power of passion all our soul's veins fill ;
We would love in one line with thy loving will ;
 Let all things else save love be dead,
 But love lift high her timeless head,—
Love with the force to fashion, make alive or kill.

XI.

Let our souls be music : thou art music, Lord—
Music's utter awful rapture-wingèd sword ;
Thy great heart respondeth, answereth, chord by chord,
 The music of the ages
 That now desponds, now rages,
Triumphs again, tremendous, through vast channels poured.

XII.

God, through pain, through anguish, make us one with
 thee :
One with hill and sky-line : one with surging sea :

One with thine own splendid death-surmounting free
Great soul that fills all things
With music of sweet wings
Floating above the tides of years that flee.

A HYMN.

Than woman's grace more infinitely tender,
Crowned with the wide sky's uttermost deep splendour,
God-like and woman-like, friend to each offender,
Sweet Mother, hear us !

Strong as the strong seas, gentle as the falling
Snowflakes of winter, hearken to our calling :
Rend thou our foes' ranks, our advance inwalling ;
Great Father, cheer us !

Ruler of the four winds, Maker of the roses,
Sweetness of thine each petal-cup discloses ;
Thine all the wealth sweet utmost summer shows is ;
Sweet Mother, hear us !

Strong in the blast of the North wind's anger,
Chider of nations, eager-footed ranger
Threading the stars' ways victor over danger,
Great Father, cheer us !

Softer than woman-heart, Healer of the weary,
Sending calm sleep down, winged, upon the dreary
Children of men when sorrow wailleth, eerie ;
Sweet Mother, hear us !

God of the war-ranks, flushed with the charges,
When the red bolts reel, blunted on the targes,

When the red foot-prints brighten river-marges,
Great Father, cheer us !

Send us a flower, God,—send us we pray thee,
Breath of thine heaven-land, seeking to-day thee !
Lo ! with our clasped hands, God; we delay thee !
Sweet Mother, hear us !

Lift us through high seas of our tribulation
Ever from high towards holier higher station :
Heal every sad soul, renovate each nation :
Great Father, hear us !

TO "SOMEBODY".

I.

Not in joy thou camest
Filling with delight
Where love's shafts thou aimest
All the pathway bright,
Crowned with a buoyant wreath of blossoms from the height.

II.

Not like common flowers
Gorgeous in array
Were the buds thy bowers
Cloistered from the way :
Blossoms were thine of sorrow, not of gaudy day.

III.

White thy buds and tender
In soft beauty were,
Not of fierce red splendour
Flushing all the air
With the august rich bloom their fiery tendrils bear.

IV.

Red with fierce pain only,
Streaked with love's own blood,
Telling of the lonely
Tides of sorrow's flood,
Is thy spirit's clear bloom, every gentle bud.

V.

Every path thou makest,
Spirit dear, divine :
Lo ! as dawn thou breakest
On this spirit of mine
Made by thine own grief-pang, ever and ever thine.

VI.

Thou art in the sunset,
Thou art in the sky,
In the white clear onset
Of the waves that try
To climb the sheer shore, surging ever yet more high.

VII.

In the honeysuckle,
Lady, is thy breast :
Dimpled dear white knuckle,
Is a lily dressed
Sweetlier e'er than thou art, in a snowier vest ?

VIII.

Thou art in the roses,
Yea, each perfect bloom
Thine own heart discloses,
Thine heart-deep perfume :
Victor, O flower triumphant, thou art o'er the tomb !

IX.

Thou art in all Nature,
Lady, unto me :
In her every feature ;
In the wide wide sea,
In the soft leaf-laughter of a wind-kissed tree.

X.

In the pure tide-laughter
On the silver sands ;
In the ripples, after,
Hunting with moist hands
For the receding tide-wave, ebbing o'er the strands.

XI.

In the ripple-surgings
Of all mountain-lakes ;
In the swift winds urging
Bushes in bent brakes ;
In all that world-wide gladness, world-wide movement, makes.

XII.

In the orange lily,

In the white as well :

In the blue land hilly :

In the soft furze-smell :

In all divine delights of Nature thou dost dwell.

XIII.

At thy golden coming,

Doth not sorrow flee ?

Summer and the humming

Of the banded bee

And laughter of all Nature do environ thee.

XIV.

When thy dark eyes meet me,

How can trouble stay ?

When thy touch doth greet me,

All is bright as day :

The sun-shines forth, and splendid is his golden ray.

XV.

Whether it be London
Or the country side,
Straightway grief is undone,
For I know my bride,
Alert, white-hearted, splendid, beautiful, swift-eyed.

XVI.

Swift dark eyes of wonder
How doth passion fill
Your sweet depths, and sunder
By its regal will
All that the separate hours between did work of ill !

XVII.

Common fields are glorious
When thy step is near :
Seasons slow, laborious,
Shine forth swift and dear ;
Thou bringest every blessing by thy coming here.

XVIII.

Lo ! for thee the ocean
Soundeth on the shore,
Its profound emotion
Pouring evermore
Forth at thy feet which love it ; thee doth it adore.

XIX.

Sweet, thy spirit is gifted
Far!beyond the crowd :
Gentle, not uplifted
Be thou : calm, not proud :
Tender of voice and queenly,—lonely, God-endowed.

XX.

Surely on some morrow
We shall rise and flee
This dim earth, and borrow
Pinions of the free,
And cleave the quiet blue superb airs joyfully.

XXI.

Surely all our longing
And our suffering known
To the high God, thronging,
Winged, around his throne,
Some day shall bring his blessing on us, for our own.

XXII.

Have we not, sweet, waited,
Through the sighing years ?
Gazed through barriers grated ?
Wetted with our tears :
The lonely sands of life-time : what relief appears ?

XXIII.

Lo ! the great sweet vision.
Death brings and his hand—
One day for our prison
Blue sky shall expand
And sweet love's perfect summer roseflush all the land.

XXIV.

Then the tender rose-flush
On thy cheek shall be :
As it burns and glows, flush
Likewise leagues of sea :
And sunrise beams resplendent, flames in every tree.

XXV.

Then we will not tarry ;
Dead will be all wrong ;
God our souls shall marry,
Married in my song
Long ere we fled the earth, vast-pinioned angels strong.

XXVI.

For in song possessing
All thy sweet sweet soul,
Music fond, caressing,
Doth around thee roll
Great waves of passion now, long ere we touch the goal.

XXVII.

But one day at sweeping
Rush of God's swift hand
All the love that, sleeping,
Charmed the sleeping land
Shall awake : awake, shall waft to heaven's strand.

XXVIII.

One hour doth the sorrow,
But one hour, endure :
Then the burning morrow
And the awful pure
Unutterable joy that God's heart maketh sure.

XXIX.

The awful spirit-sunrise
Over land and sea :
Sweeter than love's moonrise
Which on you and me
Even in life shines soft,—yea, kinglier that shall be.

XXX.

Sunrise that shall follow

Agony that slays,

Blue hill and green hollow

And the deep flower-ways

Filling with urgent life, and our hushed hearts with praise.

TO THE QUEEN OF MY YOUNG LIFE.

I.

Was there one summer air
Wherein thou wast not fair,
O sacred queen above my young life bending ?
Was there one blade of grass
Where thy foot did not pass,
Verdure and beauty of quiet blossom lending ?

II.

In the dear splendid seas
Thou wast, and in the trees,
A spirit of pure delight, of high dominion ;

And in the sunset air,
A seraph winged and fair,
Glorious with glory of white unearthly pinion.

III.

Sweet from the utter wave
Thou camest, and didst lave
Thy white feet, Venus-like, in less white foam ;
The awful wood-glades green
Thou ruledst, their swift queen ;
Through flowers, a splendour of white, thy foot did roam.

IV.

Now, looking back, I know
What meant that early glow,
That voice of passion in the vast calm air ;
That wonder of the corn
When thou, first love, wast born,
Making all wonder of youth more wondrous fair.

V.

Now glancing back I see
The long-lost shape of thee
Tender and pure amid the early flowers :
Thine eyes of swift grey-green,
And thy soft laugh serene
I hear, low-ringing amid the haunted bowers.

VI.

O valley, soft green glade,
Wherein my love was laid
When, for this earth's brief space, it fell a-sleeping,
Hearken,—and birds that fly
Athwart that Northern sky,
Or sing, for pleasure indeed, where I go weeping !

VII.

Hearken,—as I look back
O'er the long sunburnt track,
Sunburnt, blood-stained, and trodden deep by sorrow,

Wondering what calm may lie
Before me, when I die
From earth and labour of earth, in heaven's to-morrow !

VIII.

Where art thou blowing to-day
O rose that o'er life's way
Shonest in the early soft sun-dawn so sweetly ?
Art thou as splendid still,
A woman born to thrill
The hearts and spirits of men, divine completely ?

IX.

Art thou as splendid yet
As on the day we met ?
Though hours of twelve long years have fled away
On urgent time-tossed wings,
The memory round me clings
Of beauty of thine, intense with sunrise-ray.

X.

A woman art thou now,
Thought-crowned and calm of brow,—
A budding rose of morning wast thou then ;
Girl-soft and sweet of mien,
At beautiful fifteen,—
A spirit of perfect bloom to gladden men.

XI.

Just as the girl and child
Met in thy love-glance wild,
The look perchance doth meet of woman and girl
Upon thy flower-face now,
And in thine elder brow,
Now soberer billows of life about thee swirl.

XII.

But passion stronger still
Than passion of the rill
Of youth,—yea passion of the deep-toned sea,—

Is in thy nature, queen,
Now the long years have seen
The rosebud brighten and fill with flowers the tree.

XIII.

On thee death lays no hand,
Thou queen of sea and land,
Queen of the forest, darling of the vale ;
Crowned with all song's sweet flowers,
Yea, plunged amid the bowers
Of endless singing as 'mid rose-clusters pale.

XIV.

Thou hast grown from bud to flower,
Ripened in every power ;
Still for thy footstep yearns the enringing foam
That hems that Northern shore
And sings to it, evermore,—
As ever around thy form my song-tides roam.

XV.

Still yearns the utter deep
Of heaven with eyes that weep
To see thee treading along the airy strand
Where, twelve long years ago,
We wandered to and fro,
Loving as children love, hand locked in hand.

XVI.

Yet not as children love,
For over and above
Our child-mirth rang the intense entralling sound
Of sorrow yet to be
Enthroned o'er you and me ;
Sometimes the autumnal leaves swept o'er the ground.

XVII.

The summer passed : to-day
The flowers have fled away,
But all the autumnal dying tints as well ;

Summers in front, sublime,
Chant, bird-voiced, through my rhyme,
With message of ardent glowing life to tell.

XVIII.

Passion is fierce and strong
Though the cold years be long
And tedious o'er us hangs the love-god's hand :
Flaccid of face is he,
Yet still the old sweet sea
Curls ripples of silvery foam upon the sand.

XIX.

Still in the dells the flowers
Worship the sun for hours,
And blossoms burn where our soft steps should be ;
The wayward fern-fronds grace
The old familiar place,
And the old unchanged soft moonbeam lights the sea.

XX.

And the unforgotten face
Of thee, sweet, fills the place
As with a flame of tender-scented flowers ;
Wilt thou not wait for me,
Soft-footed, by the sea,
Glad-footed, a flower within the twelve years' bowers ?

XXI.

O moon of splendid calm,
O stinging soft white palm,
O glory of womanhood, mature indeed,
Is now thy bosom ripe,
Proud-womanly in type,
And shall it seek, for love's great flower, a weed ?

XXII.

By all the young sweet days
And the eager burnished blaze
Of utter sunlight on the laughing sea,

And rays of tremulous moon,
And night's low-surg'ing tune,
Is love forgotten, O queen, forgotten of thee ?

XXIII.

Oh, are there roses bound
Within thy breast and wound
Within thine hair, and not one rose for me ?
Are there within thy breast
Ten thousand thoughts caressed
Flower-like, yet not one thought for the old bright sea ?

XXIV.

Oh, hath thy kiss delayed
By road-side, hath it strayed
Amid the untender woods, sweet, far from me ?
Then let it now return
Rose-soft, and o'er me burn,
Like greeting of west wind gentle o'er the sea !

XXV.

Hath thy dear mouth the flowers
Made fragrant for long hours,
And hath thy mouth no blossom-kiss for me ?
Shall I not, one night, mark,
Moon-splendid through the dark,
Thee tender as God, love, love-flushed by the sea ?

XXVI.

Shapely as Venus, white
As her own body bright,
Tender with awful tenderness for me,
A perfect woman-form
Moon-white, unclothed and warm,
A goddess whose wings brood, passionate, o'er the sea.

XXVII.

Then shall thine utter kiss
Be God to me in bliss,
Godlike, me godlike make ; transfigure me :

And as the old world's dead wings
Release me, lo ! there rings
My voice of risen delight, love, o'er the sea.

TO MY LADY.

A BALLAD.

Wonderful naked neck,
Marble, pure, beyond fleck.

Wonderful sea-deep eyes,
Splendid as waves or skies.

Wonderful arms and hands,
Wonderful soft hair-bands.

Wonderful body, too sweet
For bodies of gods to greet.

Wonderful lips, divine
With savour of eglantine.

From what wonderful land
Camest thou, girl-form grand ?

Rising as Venus rose
From white waves, whiter than snows.

Coming as Venus came
To set the world aflame.

Love, where art thou now,
Tender, noble of brow ?

What flowers in what land
Have caressed thine hand ?

Dost thou dream of me,
Dream of our old sweet sea ?

Dream of the love-sweet dell,
Where our footsteps fell ?

Dream of the words I spoke
When love the silence broke ?

Dream of the deep green valleys
Whence the soft breeze sallies,

Laden with odours fair
That soften the summer air ?

Dost thou dream of the days
When, ardent with new-born lays,

I flung at thy dear feet
Many a song-flower sweet ?

Splendid as Dante's queen
(She too was fifteen

When he first beheld
Her figure and love forth-welled)—

Splendid as Dante's bride
Thou wast, by the green cliff-side

Standing, lithe, upright,
Youth's wonderful one sweet sight.

Now thou art no more
A glory on that far shore.

The inland woods have heard
Thy laughter, O love-voiced bird !

And inland flowers have seen
The seawind-kissed fair queen.

Art thou content with flowers
That blossom within thy bowers ?

Dost thou not yearn for the sea ?
Dost thou dream never of me ?

Oh, wonderful body and hands,
Who kisseth the brown hair-bands ?

Who kisseth body and hair
And breast-flowers soft and rare ?

Hath he wonderful tender hands
To gladden the brown hair-bands ?

Hath he subtle and gentle touch
To fondle the dear neck much ?

Hath he voice of the old sweet sea ?
Hath he love and lyre of me ?

Hath he spirit as fierce as mine,
And passion as sparkling wine,

And love as the old white flowers
That scented our woods for hours ?

Take this one far word :
Let the sound of my song be heard

Where thou art sitting to-day,—
Look up, sweet,—hearken, I pray.

Give me thy wonderful hand,
And enter the long-lost land.

Enter the woods one night,
A spirit, a wonder white.

Or I will wait for thee
By the old unaltered sea.

Give me a kiss and cling
About me, O soft of wing !

Touch me with every nerve :
With wonderful bend and curve

Of wonderful supple form,
Womanly, eager, warm,

Earnest, swift, on fire,
Sate my desire.

Lean and throb to me
Like music of the sea.

Be body and neck and face,
Mixed in a wild embrace

Awful, entire, supreme,
Great as a great God's dream.

Give me thine utter soul,
Thy spirit, thine heart,—the whole.

Be compliant and pure ;
With rapture of clasp secure

My neck in thine eager hands,
And smother with loose hair-bands

(That fluctuate over me,
So that their night I see

Alone, and nought beside
Save star-eyes of my bride)

My face, and pour thy splendour
Great, terrible, burning, tender,

Throughout me : like all flowers
That ever filled earth's bowers ;

Or like the rush of a stream,
Or music's manifold dream.

Like one multiform flower,
My body and soul imbower,—

One woman-blossom, giving
Joy utter, abundant, living ;

Joy beyond all speech,
That song's words cannot reach ,

Joy that quivers along
The body in throbs of song,

And through the soul in leaps
That stir the soul's dim deeps—

Wonderful body divine,
Flower-body, be thou mine ;

Flower-lips, rose-mouth, kiss, cling,—
White arms, be tense white ring

My body to embrace :
And, wonderful woman-face,

Thy spirit through thine eyes
Mingle, with dear low sighs

Of utter joy, with me :

Woman, my_awoman be.

'A HYMN OF WOMAN.

Is there one summer night
Wherein thou art not white,
O Woman diviner than all summer airs ?
Is there one tender rose
Without thy mouth that glows
Within the central crown the rosebud bears ?
Each meadow of corn thy golden beauty wears.

The dreams of youth are thine,
The buds upon the vine,
The splendour of noonday and of quiet night :

Thy sacred locks of gold
Round lovers thou dost fold,
And in the utter stars thine eyes are bright ;
Radiant thou shinest upon the mountain-height.

What glory can we see
Of passion without thee
O dark-eyed queen of passion and of pure
Delight that makes all things
Thrill to the sound of wings,
Start at the gleam of some celestial lure ;
Within thine hand thou dost all flowers secure.

Thine hair is black as night
Sometimes, or golden-bright
As every shade of slowly-ripening corn ;
Or English simple brown
Soft locks thou hast for crown,

And breast whose subtle sweet scents put to scorn
Blossoms whose dew-kissed petals kiss the morn.

Whether in youth we dream
Or days of manhood teem
With urgent labour, lady, thou art there
In love the world to drape ;
No mortal may escape
The sweet bewildering tangle of thine hair ;
With the increasing years thou growest more fair.

Thou art a sacred queen
To boyish rapt sixteen,
But never the flying days may fly from thee ;
Thou broodest as of old
Above the tossed broad gold
Of sunset and of sundawn on the sea,
And o'er the wind-tossed grass-blades of the lea.

Ever thou art, love, there,—
The wind-wave of thine hair,
And all thy splendour of bloom, and thy white hands ;
Yea, thy pure body white
Is our sweet moon of night,
Amazing and enthralling all the lands
With ever sweeter tenure of pure bands.

Sweet, ardent, swift of gaze,
Upon the flower-hung ways
Of earliest youth thou treadest like a queen ;
But when the soft flowers fall
Thou art still over all,
Abiding with the same old smile serene
Untouched amid the autumnal dim demesne.

For autumn unto thee
Is but as spring ; we see
No diminution in thy glory, O thou

For whom the roses wear
Their garb of fragrant air,
For whom the lilies bend imperial brow ;
For whom the autumnal breezes whisper now.

Not ever a rosebud falls
Within grey trellised walls
But for its falling do the great gods grieve ;
But thou beyond all grief,
Untouched, unsere of leaf,
Regnant, the immortal high land dost achieve,
And bloomest deathless from life's morn till eve.

Beyond all seas and showers,
Beyond all earthly hours,
Unconquered and immortal, sweet, thou art :
The utter dreamful skies
Thrill to thy tender eyes ;

The moonbeams and the sunbeams watch thine heart ;
Through the blue moonlit heavens thy swift feet dart.

Thou art not any flower
Of earthly passing bower,
But sweet and glorious as from God's own hand :
Thou fillest all the breeze
And the far laughing seas
And all the green recesses of the land
With rose-breath, as when countless flowers expand.

In history's far weird days
Thou didst thy banner raise
Unchanged ; thou wast to races vanished long
The same unearthly queen
Of majesty serene,
With sceptre sweet and so with sceptre strong ;
A poem in Greece or Rome, a Syrian song.

By rivers echoing far
'Neath dead and broken star,
'Neath planets fallen themselves now in the void,
Thou wast a flower new-born
With all the flush of morn
Upon the cheeks whose tender flush decoyed,
And sweetness in the white hands which destroyed.

Thou ravelledst hearts of men
As even now, so then,—
Thou tangledst strong men's spirits in a snare :
Thou gavest unto them
Sweet passion's diadem,—
To kiss thy bosom and to kiss thine hair,—
To know thee longed-for and to find thee fair.

Through the ages thou hast been
The same white endless queen,
Filling the vales with music and the sky

With wonderful pure light,
And all our hearts with might,—
Soothing with gentle laughter every sigh,
Bringing the bounty of farthest heaven more nigh.

What thou wast in the day
When on the water-way
Flamed the bright galley of the Egyptian queen,
Thou art, white sweetheart, still ;
Late ages thou dost thrill,
And thou didst gladden all the years between ;
Fostering, above earth's gardens thou dost lean.

Intenser is the rose
Of passion when it blows
In later manhood,—and the growing race,
Woman, find fairer things
Soft-gathered in thy wings

And tenderer hues of beauty in thy face
Than all thy far ancestral rumoured grace.

.

So, lady, left so long
Beside the sea-waves strong,
Intenser ever is the love I bear
Unto thy dear grey eyes
Coloured as Northern skies
And all the endless garland of thine hair,
And body white and wonderful and fair.

No day can pass but brings
Sound sweeter of thy wings,
And tenderer echo of approaching feet :
Thou canst not flee away ;
Is even sombre and grey ?
Flush it with sunrise of thy coming, sweet,
And at thy voice bid all the old mists retreat !

REMEMBER ME.

As thou dost through far flying vales retreat
With soft breath than the wind-kissed rose more sweet,
Remember me !

Remember me when sunset through the panes
Gleams,—when the burning gold of sunrise reigns
Above the sea.

When all the woods in June with laughing birds
Are loud, remember love's old June-sweet words,
Love's summer glee.

As thou dost hold thy new love by the hand,
Remember, lady, all the old flowerful land,
Remember me !

When 'days are dreary now, and lips are cold,
And no sweet singer at thy gate is bold,
Think on the sea.

Think how the old waves sang louder for my song,
How sweet the moonlit beach was, and the strong
Lyre of love's glee.

By all the old summer days and woods divine
That leapt at lovers' footsteps, yours and mine,
Remember me !

By silent sorrowing in thy swift retreat
Think, if the rills be tender, how more sweet
The open sea.

Think, if the buds that smile for thee inland
Be gracious, were it not more grace to stand
Alone with me ?

Far out of sight of common haunts and ways,
Tender as in the old tender-eyed sweet days
Beside the sea ;

The days which closed in sacred wondrous tune
Of mystic first love 'neath the mystic moon,
In marvellous glee ;

Were it not passing sweet again to stand,
Lips touching sweet lips, strong hand touching hand,—
Remember me.

HYMN.

By thy perfect sea,
Lord deliver me !

By thy strength of hand
Over sea and land,

Over hills and plains ;
By thy love that reigns :

By thy stars and storms,
By thy sun that warms :

By thy snow that shields
Seeds and fallow fields :

By thy breath that speaks
In the sweet spring-weeks :

By the summer rose,
Where thy beauty glows :

By thy tenderness,
By thy soft caress :

By thine outspread wings,
Wherethrough thunder sings :

By thy glories poured
Over mount and sward :

By thy wondrous might,
Shown in starry night :

By thy mountain-lakes,
By thy white snow-flakes :

By thy lonely seas,
By thy rosefed breeze :

By thy rains and clouds,
By thy white mist-shrouds :

By thy heaven of blue,
Which thy love smiles through :

By thy tender heart,
By thy lightning dart :

By thy wondrous world
In thy love-robe furled :

By thy majesty,
God, deliver me !

LOVE-SONG

Are the roses in the green lanes sweet,
The soft airs tender ?
Are the red flowers bright among the wheat,
Clothed in rich splendour ?

Are the white waves swift upon the shores,
With feet advancing ?
Is the moon a marvel when it pours
Forth light-floods dancing ?

Are the stars a glory in the sky,—
The green sea-billows
A grandeur,—is there sadness in the sigh
Of wind-swept willows ?

Is there wonder in the melody of night,
And perfect glory
In the tossing of the long manes white
Of sea-waves hoary ?

Is there soothing in the North wind's kiss,
The South wind's greeting ?
Is the West wind messenger of bliss,
Tired faces meeting ?

Is there healing in the great sweet hand
Of God which lifts us,
Redeeming from the waste far land
Where sorrow drifts us ?

The roses on thy lips are sweet,
Thy soft kiss tender :
Thy feet shine swift among the wheat,
Garbed in white splendour.

Thy steps are swift upon the shores,
Glad steps advancing :
Thy glance a marvel when it pours
Forth love-floods dancing.

Thine eyes are tender as the sky
That meets the billows :
Thy soul is gentle as the sigh
Of breeze-swept willows.

There is wonder in thy melody by night,
And perfect glory

In the trembling of thy soft hands white
O'er love-tales hoary.

There is soothing in thy soft soft kiss,
Balm in thy greeting :
Thy lips are messengers of bliss,
Long-lost lips meeting.

There is healing in thy sweet white hand,
O love, which lifts us,
Saving from the roseless land
Where life's storm drifts us.

SONG.

THE FUTURE.

The blue sky gleams,
The old dead dreams
Vanish adown the air :
From tree and bower,
From grass and flower,
Comes message of morning fair

Again the rose
In England glows,
Again the sweet streams sound :

The woods are white
With buds' delight,
Anemones star the ground.

The utter sky
Gleams pure and high
And the old moon thrills the vales :
Once more for free
Souls sounds the sea,
And the outspread wide wind's sails.

Far, far behind,
We leave the blind
Deaf souls who love the past ;
The future's deep
Voice thrills our sleep,
Its mantle upon us is cast.

The green meads sing,
Alert of wing
The future's songsters fly
On sweet white pinions
O'er broad dominions
Of wonderful untouched sky.

E'en love is new
And sweet of hue,
Flushed as the first spring rose,
And passion gleams,
Soft-draped in dreams,
And the blossom of soul-life blows.

DESDEMONA RE-AWAKENED.

Desdemona is alive !

The strange sweet head

Shines, is not dead :

We are re-wed.

The green fields laugh ;

The blue waves gleam ;

Death was a dream ;

O sweet sun-beam !

My woman smiles ;
O same eyes still
I strove to kill,
Have ye your will !

My love is here ;
O dear same hands,
What love expands
In heaven's new lands !

Or is it earth ?
The earth new-born
With flush of morn
On bright brow worn.

O love ! love ! love !
I slew my soul
With you—the whole :
Death was the goal.

O soft-haired head !

O eyes of light

And bosom white

And shoulder bright !

O body and soul !

Body so sweet

And soul so meet ;

Lo ! doubt's defeat !

*TO THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, ON HIS
LEAVING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.*

Now where the high hills are
And all the airs with mountain flowers are sweet,
Tread thou ; the valleys yearn not for thy feet :
Their wreathed mists bar
Thy vision, in prison, from risen great gold star.

Now where the strong streams run
Seek thou with ever more familiar tread
The utmost summits where the sun burns red,
The strong free sun,
And where in air most fair God's crowns are won.

The crowns of victors strong,
O'er pain, o'er doubt, o'er loneliness, o'er death,
Who have traversed life's lone sea with fearless breath ;
But now they long,
Yearn, each, in speech to reach the victors' song.

For the utmost tenderness
Of spirit is all the hope man can bestow :
To win from his own soul its utmost glow,—
So to redress
Some pain and strain, and gain love's white caress.

The awful utter love
Is the only gift we care for now,—to hold
Within our souls God's soul and this unfold :
All mere creeds move
Fast on the blast, are passed,—this dwells above.

Beyond all earthly creeds
Thou passest now to the utmost peak, O friend,
Where in love's vision all our visions blend :
Each soul that bleeds
High to this sky with sigh at length succeeds.

With deep sigh of relief,—
Watching at last the unimprisoned stars
Now face to face and not through Church-forged bars :
Sweet even if brief
The hour when power doth shower from sun to sheaf.

The one gold autumn hour
Whose glory compensates for all the year
Of mingled pain and labour and swift fear ;
When thought to flower
Springs, and the autumnal woodbine rings life's bower.

To pour our souls away
In utter selfless love ; this joy alone
Sets the divine sweet soul on God's pure throne :
This in our day
We yearn and burn to compass, as we may.

August 22, 1880.

THE IMMORTAL AND THE MORTAL.

Oh where the immortal and the mortal meet

In union than of wind and wave more sweet,

Meet me, O God—

Where thou hast trod

I follow, along the blood-print of thy feet.

Oh, though the austere ensanguined road be hard

And all the blue skies shine through casemates barred,

I follow thee—

Show thou to me

Thy face, the speechless face divinely marred.

Lo ! who will love and follow to the end,
Shall he unscarred a smooth unred way wend ?
 Shall he not too
 With bitter dew
Of blood the bright path bead, strained hands extend ?

Lo ! who will follow love throughout the way,
From crimson morning flush till twilight grey ?
 Who fears not chains,
 Anguish and pains,
If love wait at the ending of the day ?

If at the ending of the day life's bride
Be near our hearts in vision glorified :
 If at the end
 God's hand extend
That far triumphant boon for which we sighed.

Oh, where the immortal to our mortal flows,
Flushing our grey clay heart to its own rose,
 Spirit supreme
 Upon me gleam ;
Make me thine own ; I reckon not the throes.

I would pour out my soul in one long sigh
Of utter yearning towards thine home on high :
 I would be pure,
 Suffer, endure,
Pervade with ceaseless wings the unfathomed sky.

Oh, 'at the point where God and man are one,
Meet me, thou God ; flame on me like the sun ;
 I would be part
 Of thine own heart,
That by my hands thy love-deeds may be done.

That by my hands thy love-truths may be shown
And far lands know me for thy very own ;
Descend on me
Like surge of sea,
Like splendid tower of water shoreward blown.

Oh, to the point where man and God unite,
Raise me, thou God ; transfuse me with thy light ;
Where I would go
Thou, God, dost know ;
For thy sake I will face the starless night.

The night is barren, black, devoid of bloom,
Scentless and waste, a wide appalling tomb ;
To tardy wings
Of life woe clings
And fiery hours insatiable consume.

But where thou art with me thy mortal, one,
God, mine immortal, my death-conquering sun,

Meet me and show

What path to go

Till the utter work of deathless love be done.

TO THE GREATER WOMAN.

O greater woman with the great sweet hands,
Queen of all flowers and loves in all sweet lands,
When lonely, in weird pain, my spirit stands,

O great love, hear me !

When loves of earth are feeble and forsake,
Thou Woman-God, my worn-out spirit take,
Renew, deliver ; soften and re-make ;

Great God, be near me !

Heal me with wonder of thine awful kiss :
If earth's friends fail, and ever earthly bliss
Declines, O God *thy* beauty—leave me this !
Thy breath to cheer me !

O queenlier woman with the loving breast
So white, so tender, soothe me, give me rest ;
If all are frail, in thee my soul is blest ;
O white love, save me !

O whiter woman with the rose-sweet hair
Than all the abundant tresses yet more fair
Which the dear brows of earthly women wear,
Lift from the grave me !

I mix my heart with thine : with awful cry
I turn me theeward from the loves that lie ;
I trust thee, seek thee, praise thee as I die,
For thou shalt save me !

Are they flower-soft ? then art thou softer yet
And tenderer : on thy brow more high calm set ;
Oh, let my face by thy swift face be met,
O woman, hold me !

In arms that never open to let fall,
In breast wherethrough no withering serpents crawl,
In hands that close in like a sweet safe wall,
O sweet God, fold me !

O greater heavenlier woman than all these,
With breath more tender than the tenderest breeze
That shakes in Italy the moonlit trees,
To thy will mould me !

NEVER MORE.

New foaming seas,
 New spring-tide breeze,
 New shells upon the shore,
 New leaves on trees,—
 But never never more

The old tides that broke on youth's beach, splendid, nor
 their roar.

New loves with gold
 Locks like the old,
 New rose-mouth to adore,
 New hands to hold,—
 But never never more

The woman's face which lighted all that laughing shore.

The shore where fell
Waves loved so well,
Where cliffs their gold flowers bore,
Whose tender tendrils swell
This year,—but never more
Shall crown the brown-haired head they crowned and bound
of yore.

New meadow-sweet in dales,
Spreading like white soft veils
Above the wild-wood floor ;
New moon when sunset pales ;
But never never more
The old moon that o'er the swoon of scented vale did soar.

New wonderful blue skies,
And wonderful bright eyes,
But not the eyes before
Whose gaze sweet love low lies ;

Yea, never never more
The hands whose tender splendour first unhinged love's door.

New nights of peace and bliss,
New woman-mouth to kiss,
But not the old mouth's sweet store
Of summer scents,—not this,—
No more, no more,
That flush of love, the sweetest woman ever wore.

DESOLATION.

With tenderest touch of mystical sweet hands
And fragrant overflow of soft hair-bands
She made me laughing lord of all love's lands.

She raised me upward towards love's eagle height
By tenderest touching of her bosom white
And by her sweet deep brown eyes' laughing light.

She kissed me on the mouth, a kiss supreme
Of a soft rose far softer than a dream,
And gave me heaven and God in one swift gleam.

She left me, mocked me,—and this earth was hell,
With never air to breathe, no flower to smell ;
Lo ! as she went, God, spear-pierced, tottering, fell.

ALONE.

Alone upon the scentless earth I stand ;

Alone :

Far barren fields stretch wide on either h

Wind-blown

Not one dear flower of woman's heart is

For me :

Not one grass-blade in rocky rainless cle

Only the awful waste of billows white

And strong :

Only the starless soundless boundless night,—

No song.

Only the Godless speechless heavens,—no sound

On land or sea :

No help, no hope, no heart, no haven found

For me.

SWEETER.

Lilies are sweet, but sweeter is thy breast
 Whereon our tired hearts fall and therein rest,

O lady ;

Its calm is than the utmost calm more blest

Of valleys shady !

The rose is sweet, but sweeter is thy mouth
 Than all the roses gladdening all the south

With fragrant splendour ;

Where thou art, ne'er for e'er is passion's drouth

O woman tender !

May-bloom is white, but whiter are thine hands
Than all May-blossoms smiling in spring-lands,

O spotless woman :

Where thou art, every gentle flower expands

Of sweet love human !

The night is sweet, but sweeter sweeter far
In thy soft arms the dreams imprisoned are ;

Far sweeter, sweeter :

Thy swift glance thrills the darkness like a star,

A sudden meteor !

Dreaming in June beside a river-shore
Is sweet, but oh with thee through dreams to soar

To love's low measure

Is sweeter, sweeter, exquisite far more,—

A nobler pleasure !

The sweet wind's kissing mouth is dear delight,

But oh thy sacred kiss that crowns the night,

Than breeze more pleasant :

And oh thy body than all flowers more white,

Joy omnipresent !

DEATH.

Death that healest the weary,
Descend thou upon me,
Dividing life's days dreary
With surge of sea.

Lo ! my spirit's summer
Fades, is past and gone :
O thou swift sure comer,
Speed thou on !

Not one love abideth ;
 No more roses gleam ;
Time all loves derideth,
 Every dream.

Not one woman waits now,
 Not one love avails ;
At thine awful gates now
 Passion pales.

Lo ! through the unbroken
 Silence comes thy voice,
Sweet, of silvery token,
 Saying, “ Rejoice.

“ If no roses wait thee,
 Lo ! I, death, am here
With wide wings to mate thee,
 Be of cheer !

“ If no bright buds yonder
 Flame upon the hill,
Through my meads, soul, wander
 At thy will.

“ If no lips be tender,
 Am not I thy queen ?
Hath not my mouth splendour
 Soft, serene ?

“ Underneath my pinion,
 Weary, be at rest ;
In calm death-dominion ;
 This is best.

“ Never wake to sorrow,
 Sorrow never more ;
Dread not, child, the morrow :
 Life is o’er.”

MODERN FAITH.

One moment's splendour in the crimson rose,
One moment's sweetness ; then all sweetness goes :
Never again the flame-flushed petal glows.

A star, a moon, a cloud, a space of blue ;
Then no more skies, moons, clouds,—no star-rays new :
No fresh morn's fern-fronds exquisite with dew.

Love gleaming splendid from the water white
One moment, cleaving waves with shoulder bright :
Then loveless passionless deep sunless night.

A kiss : sweet mouth tight-pressed against our own ;
Then autumn dying leaves about us blown ;
The dim December wind's sepulchral tone.

A woman's gracious quivering form to hold ;
Rapture to gather from her lips of gold ;
Then never pressure of sweet lips : we are old.

A dream of God and help from heaven, and then
Despair on earnest faces of all men :
Groans to the void ; no answer back again.

A dream of heavenly skies and towers of gold :
Then frozen earth, the long night and the cold ;
No bride-like heaven in eager arms to fold.

One gleam of awful passion o'er the sea :
Then never again, O love, the form of thee ;
Only the wanton flakes of foam that flee.

Summer but once ; then darkness and a tomb,
And wings of night pregnant with purple gloom ;
One rose,—no more ; one vain waft of perfume.

One glory amid the vales of cream-white fair
Soft June-loved meadowsweet in June-soft air :
One meadowsweet-soft bosom ; then despair.

TEN YEARS AGO.

Ten years ago with sweetest young emotion
 Before thy feet
I cast a swift tumultuous tossing ocean
 Of fancies fleet.

I flung before thee flowerbuds bright and burning,
 And many a dream,
And passion white and pure, and tender yearning,
 A fair heart-stream.

Where art thou now, and where are all the fancies
That flamed and flew ?

Where are the swift-winged splendid sweet romances
That climbed the blue ?

Where are the long waves wonderful and hoary
That swept the strand ?
Within those woods what flower hath now the glory
Of thy white hand ?

What meadow-sweet is sweet as was thy breathing
In the old lost days ?
What fame is pure as fame thy hand was wreathing,
The old first green bays ?

What rose is as thy girlish breast sweet-scented,
Thy shoulders fair ?
Yea, thy flushed cheek did find the rose and lent it
Its blush to wear !

What flower through all the hills and valleys gazing
 Shall love now see,
Splendid as was the unclothed white amazing
 Splendour of thee ?

What woman, Venus-like, with silvery laughter
 From the old-world foam
Sprang sweet as thou ; once loved, what love comes after ?
 What rest, what home ?

ENGLISH FLOWERS AND SEAS.

In the land of breezy cliff-tops and blown grasses,

O Christ, art thou ?

Where the summer-wind through crimson clover passes,

Do blossoms bow ?

Do the tender roses in the green June hedges

Before thee burn ?

Do the rushes tall along our river-edges

To thy face turn ?

Do the lilies white their fragrant stems before thee,

O Christ-king, bend ?

Do English woods and English hills adore thee

And greeting send ?

Is English honeysuckle glad to ring thee,

Thy fair brown head ?

Do watchful hands of English women bring thee

Soft roses red ?

Do English maidens open hearts and bosoms

For thee to see ?

Art thou the lord who gathereth English blossoms

From plant and tree ?

Are English women's spirits tearful, tender,

When thou art near ?

Trembling do they unveil for thee their splendour

With woman's fear ?

Art thou the lord of many a soft heart beating
With love of thee ?
Art thou the prince of wide waste waves retreating,
Our white fierce sea ?

Art thou the ruler of the autumn glory
Of dell and vale ?
Do women, woods, and golden leaves, and hoary
Waves, shout " All-hail " ?

Nay : Beauty's self upon our rocky ledges
Is sole sweet queen ;
She, rose of roses in our rose-sweet hedges,
Shines in the green.

She, 'mid the wavelets white a woman whiter,
Rises to stand
Upon our storm-swept cliffs a sweet star brighter
Than thy bright hand.

Our blossoms and our women bend before her,
Her face they seek :
Our mountain-winds and mountain-mists adore her ;
For her they speak.

Our maidens not for thee O Christ are tender,—
Oh, not for thee :
But English eyes their unapproached white splendour
Sometimes may see.

The eternal seas on iron shore-sides breaking
For our ears sound :
The summer winds the moon-lit aspens shaking
Love Northern ground.

The courser-waves along the gold sands charging
Not in thy name
Spread wide white manes along the yellow margin
Of beach they claim.

Yea, not for thee a maiden's rose-like passion

*
Bloomed in the North :

Not towards thy lips in mystical low fashion

Words trembled forth.

Not for all wreaths wherewith the lands imbower thee,

Would I displace

My one white rose,—nor hand, O perfect flower, thee

To Christ's embrace.

AN ADJURATION.

By the old white maze of swift bewildering billows
That stormed the strand ;
By the old dear woods' autumnal mossy pillows,
By thy white hand ;
By far streams washing tips of bended willows,
A far-off land !

By all sweet sacred memories I adjure thee,
By cliff, by star,
By maze of garden shrubs that now secure thee

AN ADJURATION.

Where no songs are ;
By the old soft dreams that once, sweet, did allure thee,
By pain's red scar !

By all the tossing tides of bitter sorrow,
A foaming main ;
By love's low whispers when he sought to borrow
New hope in vain ;
By all the soft sunrises that to-morrow
Cloud-depths retain !

By moons that swam serenely o'er the ocean,
Gilding the foam ;
By our young hearts' sustained intense emotion,
By passion's home ;
By the long deep Lethean nightshade potion
Given while we roam.

By mine own heart that never can forget thee ;
By flowers of song ;
By my swift lyre that ceaseless doth regret thee
Forlorn so long ;
By every tender flower that since hath met thee,
By yearning strong.

By silvery moonlight flooding garden reaches
Long leagues inland,
Reminding thee of rays that lit the old beaches,
The wave-swept strand
By this sad song itself whose mouth beseeches
Touch of thine hand ;

Be gracious :—as the summer rose is tender,
Be thou to me !
Unveil, white love, thy white eternal splendour

As by the sea
Love saw soft lips and shaking hands surrender :
So let it be.

Lo ! how the moonlight o'er the mountains hoary
Of time yet beams :
Rise thou O woman moon haloed with glory,
With gentle gleams ;
Close thou the wandering wail of passion's story,
Of passion's dreams.

Before the October winds the grasses harden
Tarry for me
In quiet nook of red-leaved autumn garden,
Or by the sea :
Thyself give for sweet token of sweet pardon,
The bloom of thee.

By burning light of sunrise on the spaces
 Of old fair seas ;
By the swift laughing light of love that chases
 The quick-winged breeze ;
By our words' wings and the immemorial races,
 O love, of these ;

Rise thou, a woman at last, and, flower-delightful,
 In close embrace
Pour through mine eyes the unforgotten rightful
 Dream of thy face ;
Let love be ardent, masterful and mightful,
 Some little space.

Rose of all roses, wait within the garden,
 Wait thou alone,
Woman's soft thrill of over-tender pardon

Within thy tone ;
Wait ere the stealthy frosts the first blades harden,
Ere chill winds moan !

VOICES.

Prologue.

. CHRIST.

Lo ! o'er the wide green waves is thy sun setting,
 Thy sun that flamed throughout the centuries long
 With rays so vehement of point and strong ?
 Will it be lost to sight beyond regretting
 In the green waves that surge around it, fretting
 Its red fierce disc with floods of mocking song ?
 Do new sweet moons and stars the blue night throng ?
 Will there be suns for homage and forgetting ?

We loved Christ's rose of blood till, tenderer far,
 The rose of Beauty flamed, a silver star,
 Flower-sweet, flower-tranquil, o'er the lessening foam :
 Then saw we in the depths within her eyes
 The end of our eternity of sighs,
 Peace and a haven of hope, a painless home.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Hearken : the Christ-king stands
With tender and outstretched hands ;
He bringeth a law to the lands,
Glad tidings to every shore.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Flag of the Christ-king, rise
Blood-red in the blue clear skies :
Lead us, through sorrow and sighs,
Through tears and pangs of the war.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Bend we before our King
And banners of greeting bring ;
With swift sure ecstasy sing,
With down-bent homage adore.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Hearken : our Lady is fair
As a rose in the morning air,
Sent from on high to prepare
Sweet tidings for every shore.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Beauty of Venus our queen
In front of us flame and be seen ;
Lo ! whiter than water the sheen
Of her body, our token of war.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Wonderful Goddess, thee
Sprung white from the foam of the sea,
On gladsome and bended knee
We worship and hymn and adore.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Heal us, O Christ ; our sighs
To the innermost cloudland rise :
Wipe thou the tears from our eyes,
From eyes that are weary and sore.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Never was heart so pure
As thine, Christ ; thou shalt endure
For ever : thy throne is sure,
Yea, firmer than any before.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Bountiful Christ ! oh stand
With sword and sceptre in hand :
Thou art prince, thou art king to command,
Thou art God's own Son from of yore.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Wipe thou our weeping with hair
Outpoured, sweet, smelling of air
Of tenderest June-night, rare
Sweet bounty for souls that are sore.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Never were roses as white,
O Goddess, as thy breast bright :
Tender as moon in the night
It gleams thy people before.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Beautiful rose-sweet maid,
'Neath the olives, in glimmering shade,
Thou standest, nude, unafraid,
A snow-white queen from of yore.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Bend upon us thy face,
Thy bounty, thy beauty, thy grace,—
Be our goal in the wearisome race,—
The balm of thy spirit outpour.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

By thy groans upon Calvary's tree,
Blood-drops like tides of a sea,
Redeem thou the world unto thee ;
By the oath thy Father swore.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

To the farthest bounds of the land
Far stretches his strong right hand ;
As a lion o'er leagues of sand
He paces, and loud is his roar.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead; liveth no more !

Sweet, with the balm of thy breath
Deliver from shadow of death ;
O'er mountain, valley, and heath,
Thy blessing and help outpour.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

By thine own dear calm white hands,
Calm love, deliver the lands
From shackles and perilous bands ;
Christ never thy sweet oath swore.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

To the furthest limits of sight
Soft reaches our love's hand white ;
Little she cares for the might
Of Jesus, his lion-like roar.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

All the heavens of gold
In his sure grasp Christ doth hold ;
He stands, keen, 'stalwart and bold,
Alert at the heavenly door.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Help us, O Christ, to rise
To the loftiest untouched skies :
Hear thou our groans and sighs ;
Aid us to heaven to soar.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

He walked on the waves of the lake
Which a glistening floor did make :
Not a ripple had force to shake
His foot till his march was o'er.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS. -

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

All the heavens of blue
Her clear gaze glimmereth through ;
Her soft tears fall in the dew ;
She guardeth the high morn's door.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

The sweet and the tender seas
And the loving and gentle breeze
Are thine, O Venus ; with these.
For wings thy soul doth soar.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

And Love in the blue seas shines
As they wander in sparkling lines ;
Never her grace declines,
Never her sceptre is o'er.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Surely where thou dost stand
Are flowers and songs of the land ;
Summer at thy right hand
Shines on the green earth-floor.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

What was the raiment thou
Didst wear, Christ ? crucified how
Was thy body and pierced thy brow !
Thy shoulders a red robe wore !

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Sweet are thy lips and face,—
Fulfilled of fair pure grace ;
On the steps of thy shrine we place
Rich fruits ripe to the core.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Surely within thy breast

All buds of summer time rest

As in soft and scented nest ;

Thou clothest the sweet earth-floor.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

White is thy body, O Queen ;

Its tender adorable sheen

O'er the moonlit waves is seen :

Thy shoulders their loveliness wore !

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

And we bring roses and fair

Wreaths tenderly wrought prepare :

Berries in thy black hair

We twist, red-ripe to the core.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Gifts in thine heaven, O King,
Thou hast for the hearts who sing
At thine altar, and round thee cling ;
Gifts from thine heavenly store.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Flies as a flag to the front
Christ's war-plume ; there in the brunt
Of the battle he foes doth hunt,—
Yet the people his prowess ignore.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Never shall frost again
Defile the grass of the plain ;
Never shall fierce snows stain
The wide fields frozen and hoar.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Thou art the only flower

We care for now in thy bower :

Thine own scent, sweet one, shower

Upon us, its fragrant store.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

On the sweet wind exquisite sighs

From our musical love-land rise ;

Beauty a bird in the skies ,

Sings,—yet her song they ignore.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Now the roses blow

For the waste wide miles of snow ;

Singing is with us for woe ;

Grass for the dead plains hoar.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Four Evangelists came,
Robed in raiment of flame,
Eager with passionate aim,
Christ's stern warriors four.

Christ being raised, dieth no more !

Christ the whole earth planned :
It leaped new-born from his hand ;
His Spirit the waste void fanned
With its breath, and swift life bore.

CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Beauty's messengers fair
Are fire and ocean and air,
And the green earth clothed in rare
Flower-raiment : ministers four.

Christ being dead, liveth no more !

Beauty the whole earth made ;
The sunlit lands and the shade ;
Mountain and valley and glade ;
Life as a babe She bore.

Epilogue.

BEAUTY.

Yea, thou art whiter than the Christ, O tender
Venus who risest from the waves of time
With the old form beyond all words sublime ;
As forest air when the night-mists surrender
And flowers are touched by sun, O stainless splendour
Thy breath is sweet : thou dwellest in a clime
Of love and lyric harmony and rhyme,
Far from the foot of slow-eyed foul offender.

Take thou the future ; in thy passionate kiss
Is all we need of earthly, heavenly bliss :
O body of beauty, all thy wealth bestow !
Like freshest smell of ferns in fragrant lanes
Is the dear scent that trembles o'er thy veins,
And sweeter is thy mouth than man can know.

O DEATH.

O Death in some green hollow of mountain-ranges,
By some calm sea,
Hast thou no haven of hope that never changes,
No place for me ?

Hast thou no valley green with silver fountains
Where I may rest ?
No lake that limns its deep imbosoming mountains
In liquid breast ?

Shall I not wake some quiet morn and find thee,
Lure thee to me ;
Cling to thy neck, O true love Death, and bind thee
With lover's glee ?

Thou art gentle of heart and all who love may trust thee,
Thou wilt not fail ;
Force frightens not nor sanguine battle-dust thee,
Mars not thy mail

The russet stems of summer flowers obey thee
When summer fails ;
The golden autumn glittering woods portray thee,
These are thy veils.

Thou art great of soul and sweepst with thy pinion
O'er sea and air
Winning all glory of June to thy dominion,
All robes flowers wear.

And me too singer of tragic things, and weary,
Thou shalt redeem :
Save from the endless joyless hopeless dreary
Faith in a dream.

O greater singer than I, and far more fateful,
On me who weep
Take pity and grant for songful life and hateful
A songless sleep.

THE LAND OF SLEEP.

Along with quiet spirits of elder singers
I too shall sleep,
When falls the hushed harp from the weary fingers,
In darkness deep.

There are the ghosts of those who came before me,
A strange sweet band
Whose voices from my youth have hovered o'er me
And swayed my hand.

There Keats, there Shelley ; there the figure graver
Of Wordsworth calm ;
There women-singers, souls of sweeter savour
Than June-night's balm.

There the swift eyes that gleamed, the hearts that carried
With us awhile,
Lightening for us the woes our spirits carried
With sunlike smile.

When the long days have done their task and, weary,
I too may go,
Within the dim sepulchral chambers eerie
Where cold streams flow ;

Within the hollow of deathland I shall wander,
Bringing to these
Dead spirits a sudden lyric sound of yonder
Soft English breeze ;

A gleam of sunlight on my brow yet lingering,
Glad it may be
To those whose harps once laughed to their high fingering
By English sea.

One breath of rose or furze or English heather,
That they may weep :
Then, weary as they, with them, in sombre weather,
I too shall sleep.

AND ART THOU TENDER ?

And art thou tender O Death to wayside roses,
Not good to me ?
Dost thou with cold breath wither gleaming posies
On hill and lea ;

Dost thou with gentle hand receive the summers,
Their glory past ;
Are golden Junes within thy halls glad-comers ;
In chambers vast

Of silent calm soul-healing restitution

Dost thou O Death

Gather the swift years weary of pollution

By living breath?

Oh, dost thou in thy wondrous darkened amber

Superb dim caves

Hold, as in fragrant solemn bridal-chamber

Beneath the waves,

The spirits of weary singers who by mountains

And rills of Greece

Sang to the old-world unreturning fountains,

The old-world trees?

The spirit of strong unintermittent Dante

Beside thy streams

Dwells? Hast thou not some bower, tho' bowers be scanty,

For modern dreams?

Canst thou to every pallid flower be tender,

Each pale past song,

Yet not unrobe for us thy viewless splendour

O death-breast strong?

Sweeter than woman, stronger than the passion

That through youth's veins

Bounds for the burning white sea-born Thalassian,

Death, heal our pains !

AN ELEGY.

I.

And art thou dead? O hushed in solemn chamber
 Art thou the deathless form, the deathless face,
 Caught now in death's illimitable embrace?
Is this white shrine whereover wild vines clamber
 Thy resting-place
O wondrous body to which the waves were gracious
When it sprang forth a splendour from the spacious
 Deep halls of sea-washed amber
 That close in Venus' grace?

II.

What shall I wind, O marble brow, around thee?

Surely our ancient ferns and meadow-sweet

Are even than the august great rose more meet :

The growth that filled the woods where love's eyes found
thee

And barred retreat ;

Those sacred groves wherever once a glory

Flamed like the sun,—now dim with mosses hoary,—

The woods wherein love bound thee

And stayed thy girlish feet.

III.

Wonderful hair that once the Northern breezes

Found sweeter than the clover-fields that shine

Star-like along the level cliff-top line,

Now may death's hand toy with thee as it pleases !

His fingers twine

Idly the locks at sight of which love maddened,

Idly the hair which all the sweet world gladdened ;
Now strand by strand death seizes
What once was so divine.

IV.

Thou art gone from the old grey cliff, and who may follow ?
Art thou to nether gods exceeding fair ?
Oh do they wonder at the black-brown hair,
Laughing for joy within their chambers hollow
As they prepare
Roses and flowers and many gifts to greet thee,—
Jubilant gods advancing swift to meet thee,
Yea even gold-harped Apollo
Thrilling with song the air.

V.

What land of love is thine, what perfect splendour
Of soft-voiced lovers wandering with calm feet

Along the meadows that the west winds greet
With heavenly kiss flower-exquisite and tender,
With mild heart-beat :
Whom hast thou now, O sweet beyond all roses,
On whose strong heavenly breast thy breast reposes,—
Or dost thou not surrender,
Alone for me flower-sweet ?

VI.

Oh, through the woodlands, o'er the old seas foaming,
Spirit of perfect love, I cry to thee !
Wilt thou not wait me by some sunsèt-sea,—
Within the purple sombre shadow of gloaming,—
By green spring-tree ?
Human art thou no more ? or art thou stronger
In sweetest passion-force as years grow longer ?
Stronger in that thou art roaming
Heaven-lands apart from me !

VII.

So to the spirit I cry : Thy wondrous body
Sweeter itself than flowers, with flowers I ring,
And these poor garlands of sad words I bring ;
Garlands wherein the autumn leaves mix ruddy
With sprays of spring :
Words patient under sorrow and uncomplaining,
Yet stricken of grief as leaves the storms are staining,—
Which, golden-hued or bloody,
Flutter from autumn's wing.

VIII.

No more the waves shall worship thee their daughter
Born of the tender wreaths of Northern foam ;
No more shalt thou with sun-sweet footstep roam
Over the white tossed leagues of billowy water, .
Thy well-loved home :

The tomb now holds thee as it holds each lily
That fades at even on dim upland hilly ;
Dead art thou ; dead thy laughter
Whose wings the clear heavens clomb.

Sept. 5, 1880.

CHRIST AND VENUS.

Across the weary waste of billowy water,
From heaven's high shore,
Comes Christ's voice saying, "O son, O weary daughter,
Thy toil is o'er".

Across the moonlit meads, where tremulous willows
Bend dappled arms ;
Across the bright sea's sunlit laughing billows,
Shine Venus' charms.

•

But hearken not : think of the skies so golden,
The seas so sweet,
The glory of him who trod the lake-waves olden
With unharmed feet.

But we are weary,—and love's white limbs are shining
The soft night through ;
What fellowship have we, O spirits repining
At love, with you ?

Hark to the solemn voice of Jesus saying,
“ Soon will the door
On souls unsound and feeble feet delaying
Close evermore ”.

Hark to the gracious voice of Venus chiding
The slow-foot crew ;
Her rose-sweet breasts amid the roses hiding
Tarry for you.

And *you* may win the immortal peace that faileth

Never indeed :

Believe in Christ ; mark how the pierced brow paleth,

The torn feet bleed !

Mark how the flowers faint back for very wonder

When Venus speaks :

The tints that flame behind the mountains yonder

Are in her cheeks.

After life's battle, lo ! the towers of marble ;

The sweet high song

That seraphs in God's golden palace warble,

White-plumed and strong.

After the weary day the sweet flushed night-time,

And waiting there,

Giver of every summer-soft delight-time,

Our goddess fair.

After the lusts of earth the pure dominions
Where Christ is seen
Cleaving the solemn air with gold vast pinions
Of awful sheen.

And after this the scent among the mountains
Of Venus' locks :
Sound of her footstep tender amid the fountains
And moss-gay rocks.

After the heat of earth the cool high heaven
Where no lusts dwell :
Lifted we are, yea saved, we sinners, even
From flames of hell.

Lifted *we* are by the divine dear brightness
Of Venus' breast :
Yea, by the body's soft exceeding whiteness
Our lips caressed.

Jesus ! from all foul thoughts and shapes deliver !

From all base dreams !

Their goddess pierce with darts from out thy quiver ;

With sword that gleams !

Hurtless art thou and harmless, sweetheart tender,—

Christ's arrows fail ;

For thine invulnerable naked splendour,

Nude, needs no mail.

THE ONLY REST.

There is a land where roses fade not ever,
Where hearts once joined in one turn traitors never,

The land of death :

There all is silent : through that pure dominion
Flies never a bird with wandering wistful pinion

And wistful breath.

Our flowers betray us, fading with the summer,
Each sunset darkens for the night, sure-comer,

Pursues each hard ;

Life robs us fast of sweet familiar faces,
Robs us of health, endows and then displaces
Each aging bard.

Beauty is sweet : tender the fair white shoulder ;
But beauty groweth dim,—the lips wax colder
That once were warm :
The flower-scent quits the neck and leaves the bosom
That once was wordless wealth a bloomless blossom,
Quits mouth and arm.

The winter groweth apace : our loves escape us ;
In mantle of chill gloom the dark days drape us ;
The dark short days :—
The old summer thoughts and dreams are no more valid ;
By autumn walls the autumn daisies pallid
Their dank heads raise.

NO MORE.

The sweet green flowerful laughing summers coming
 Again shall shine ;
Again the June wind's subtle fingers strumming
 Shall shake the pine ;
Again the yellow-banded bee go humming
 O'er clover and vine.

Again the long waves, wonderful in whiteness,
 Shall storm the shore ;
The yellow moon with the old weird shimmering brightness

Her rays forthpour ;
Yea, some shall love with the old unchanged heart-lightness,
But we no more.

Weary the world seems ; like a woman colder,
Who soft words said
But yestereve and leant with dear soft shoulder
Against our head :
She is changed to-day ; and all the world's grown older !
Its charm is fled !

ANOTHER AUTUMN.

The leaves again are glorious green and golden ;
The child is gone
Whose laughter through the bright glades in the olden
Days lured me on.

While as of old with sanguine autumn splendour
The wild woods shine,
Not as of old the young face soft and tender
Looks up to mine.

Once I could happier make a child's heart beating
 With love of me
By word or touch, than all the high sun's greeting
 Makes glad the sea.

Now weary amid the selfsame groves I wander ;
 As erst, they are fair :
But one gold gift shines not that once shone yonder—
 A child's gold hair.

One gentle thing that sounded sounds not ever—
 A child's sweet tone :
One hand will seek the hollow of my hand never ;
 I am alone !

HOLD THOU MY HAND!

When I too pass at length, a weary singer,
To death's dim land ;
When no more dreams and visions round me linger,
Hold thou my hand !

When the last song is sung, the last word spoken,
The last kiss sealed—
When for thee, love, the silence is unbroken,
Nor death's gates yield ;

When for the last time I, thy poet tender,
 Thy mouth have kissed ;
When no more round thee sweeps the wild song-splendour ;
 Shall I be missed ?

Will morning flowers lack somewhat, love, of brightness
 Because of me ?
The moon with less of thrilling soft love-whiteness
 Caress the sea ?

Will the long days without me, love, be dreary ;
 The long strange days ?
The uncaressing starless cold nights weary ?
 Footsore the ways ?

Wilt thou remember how the old dear moon-glory
 Fell o'er the seas ?
The thunder of waves whose prancing squadrons hoary
 Charged at our knees ?

And oh the night : the night of sacred wonder,
Mute, crowned of stars,
When, once, the fiery love-god smote in sunder
All gates and bars.

Wilt thou, when never husband-hand and tender
May more embrace,
May captive hold thine uttermost wife-splendour,
Think of my face ?

Think of the singer who for thee sang solely,
When not one heard ;
Who gave thee all his soul-power, gave it wholly
In deed and word ?

Oh, will the eternal nights we passed soft-sleeping
With God for guard
Rush on thy memory ? wilt thou wake, sweet, weeping,
And struggle hard

To reach my spirit yearning down from heaven

With eager speed ?

Oh, God, how little yet, how little is given

To meet great need !

Thou art weary of song sometimes ; wilt thou be weary

When no songs more

Beat at thy window with moon-pinions eerie ?

When no sounds soar ?

When for the last time through the night I follow

The form of thee

Leading to our sequestered soft dream-hollow

Beside the sea ?

When never again in utter love I hold thee

O woman, O sweet !

Never again in strong embrace enfold thee

Nor thine eyes meet !

Oh be not weary ; think how short a season

Love-life may be !

Thou lovest me, I know, beyond all treason ;

So love I thee.

Hold thou my hand through life : and if death takes me

To his dim land

Ere thou must go, then, as life's breath forsakes me,

Hold *thou* my hand !

THEE FIRST, THEE LAST.

Because thou wast the first
To waken passion's thirst
When all the morning youthful air was sweet ;
Because while yet the dew
Fresh fern-fronds glittered through
Thou didst the fern-fronds shake with youthful feet,
Thy name first, last, in song-land I repeat.

Because the seas were fair
With breath of morning air
When thou didst traverse, laughing, their wide ways ;

Because in vale and dell
Young spring-like petals fell
And dreams were sweet in many a woodland maze,
Thee first, thee last, in song to heaven I raise.

Because the woods were green,
Because thou wast my queen
Long ere pale sorrow haunted with fierce wings
The autumn desolate rills,
And thunder-smitten hills,
And forests dark where pain her white hands wrings,
Thee first, thee last, my lyre's remembrance sings.

Because thou wast my Bride,
Young, beautiful, soft-eyed,
Long ere the voice of other woman spoke ;
Because thou wast the flower
First sent in life's first hour,

White as the seas that round our footsteps broke,
Both first and last I bow me to thy yoke.

Because no woman's face
Had, then, the same sweet grace,
Nor flower-like fell the hands of woman then
Caressing on my heart ;
Because the crown of Art
Thou wast, and my life's mission among men
Thou madest plain, I hymn thee, love, again.

I hymn, sweet lady, thee,
With voice of our old sea,
With passionate surge of song-wave on the shore
Of fast-receding time ;
I seek thee in my rhyme,
Beautiful, tender as thou wast, once more,
And all the old darling days of love adore.

Because in the early glow
Of morning thou didst throw
A glamour o'er my life that never yet
Hath faded quite away,
Though shades of evening grey
Are in the west, and cold years must be met,
Upon thy brow this wreath of song I set.

I bring thee, love, again
A soft memorial strain ;
A memory as of morning o'er the sea :
Pale flowers for thee to wind,
With love-glance flung behind,
Within thy tresses ere swift years that flee
Banish the morning thoughts, and thoughts of me.

Thee first, thee last, I crown
And lay my singing down

Just as of old for blessing of thine hand ;
 Again, in dreams, a boy,
 Full of love's fiery joy,
Watching the sea-shades of thine eyes I stand,
While miles of meadow-sweet scent all the land.

SLEEP.

When the wild days, love,
Pass, and night's haze, love,
For the sun's blaze, love,
 Falls o'er the land ;
How we shall sleep, love,
Tenderly weep, love,
Passion-joy reap, love,
 Glad hand in hand !

How we shall kiss, love,
Pleasure we miss, love,
Into one bliss, love,
 Swift-gathered then ;
How we shall cling, love,
While our souls sing, love,
While passion's wing, love,
 Guards us again.

Now the days dreary
Groan, and the eerie
Frozen nights weary
 Body and heart ;
Yea, not a pleasure
Breaks our sad leisure ;
Sick beyond measure
 Sigh we apart.

Oh, when together
How the old tether
Bursts, and blue weather
 Laughs in the breeze !
How the old sadness
Fades, and our gladness
Mounts up to madness,
 Thrilleth the trees !

How we are lifted,
Blessed now and gifted,
We who were drifted
 Far out to sea ;
Now thy heart waketh,
Sweet one, that breaketh,
Trembleth and acheth,
 Lost without me !

I too am waking,
Draught of joy taking,
Eager lips slaking
 In the pure wine ;
Wine that thou givest,
Love, while thou livest—
As thou receivest
 Strength-gifts of mine.

Ah ! when our sorrow
Flies on the morrow,
How we shall borrow
 Pinions to fly :
How we shall soar, love,
Bursting the door, love,
Slavery o'er, love ;
 Free, you and I !

When we meet next, love,

Joy for our text, love,

Tired not nor vexed, love,

How we shall weep :

One day forsaking

Earth and its aching,

Prison-bars breaking,

How we shall sleep !

THIS VERY DAY.

This very day long years ago
The autumn woods were sweet
With passage of thy feet,
Thrilling the wild gold wheat
And glades where dim flowers blow.

Eleven years this very day
I asked thee to be mine
And round thy brow did twine
Ferns, heather, and woodbine,
And many a woodland spray.

Eleven long long years !

Where hast thou been so long,

O lady of my song,—

For still the wild flowers throng
The woods, and still thine ears

May hear the old love-strain

That filled the woods that day

Around thy spirit play,

Cheering thy feet that stray

Along life's outstretched plain.

But oh that autumn day !

How sweet the clear blue weather

Was, when we strolled together,

Feet light as flying feather,

Along the woodland way ;

Talking of fairy-lore ;
Of many mystic things ;
Of the rustle of love's wings ;
Of how love sits and sings ;
Till night came, all was o'er.

Over : for ever over :
The long sweet day was ended,
The light with darkness blended,
The trees dark arms extended ;
Faded the scent of clover.

Faded love's fragrance too ;
Faded the rocky seat
Whereon you sat, my sweet,
With mosses for your feet ;
Darkened the skies so blue.

And all was in the past ;
That past which holds our dreams,
And all the dead sun-beams,
And all the dried-up streams ;
Holds them,—and holds them fast.

There in the past art thou,
O lady of the dear
Green woodland that shines clear
Across so many a year ;
So clear I see it *now*.

And see thee with the face
So dear, so sweet, so young,
That all my heart hath sung,
That once my spirit wrung,
Yea, slew it for a space.

See thee with soft girl's eyes
Upon that mossy seat,
O girlish love so sweet ;
Within that green retreat ,
Beneath those blue lost skies.

Listening with tender face
To first love's eager tune ;
And then, the cliff, the moon,
The star-lit soft night soon,
The placid ocean-ways !

O wonderful lost dream !
On this the very day
I turn back, while I may,
And sing a lost moon-beam,
A wandering starry ray ;

And sing the face that shone
So flushed, so fair, so sweet,
Within the green retreat ;
Yea, sing the white swift feet
Whose swiftness lured me on :

Yea, sing the old strange eyes
Of mingled green and grey,
That on this very day
Laughed in the woodland way,
Flashed under autumn skies.

Sept. 17, 1880.

*TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE PRINCE'S QUEST
AND OTHER POEMS".*

Wouldst thou join, O brother,
The swift-winged poet-throng ?
Wouldst thou tread the burning
Paths where singers, yearning
Onward, upward turning,
Jostle one another,
The mountain-air among ?

Oh, thy soul is young yet,
Crowned with sweet youth's leaves ;
Thou hast not been maddened
By neglect, and saddened
By lost love,—but gladdened
All thy soul hath sung,—yet
Fate thy future weaves.

Joy thou shalt have, singer ;
Not all song is pain :
Hearts of women sweeter
Than thine own soft metre,
Than thy swift words fleeter,
Shall for thy sake linger,—
Hearken to thy strain.

Many a sunset waits thee,
Many a summer day ;

Many a bower of roses
Where Venus' breast reposes
And all its wealth discloses ;
Time not yet, friend, hates thee ;
Thou art early in the way.

Many a friend shall find thee,
Many a friend forsake ;
Many a love with tender
Show of white soft splendour
Shall for thee surrender ;
Many a bright noon blind thee,
Many a morning break.

Many seas with billows
Green or blue or grey
Shall for thee their roaring
Music be forth-pouring :

Many birds be soaring
Through the oaks and willows
Where thy footsteps stray.

So thy life shall forward
Push its lingering wave ;
Till the stars less golden
Seem than in the olden
Sweet days mist-enfolden ;
Till thou lookest shoreward,
Poet, at thy grave.

See that ere thou sinkest,
Some true work be done :
Ere the rose-leaves wither
Seek to lure fame hither ;
With thy lyre and zither
Light what life thou drinkest
Ere the set of sun.

One true song is endless,
One sweet hymn supreme :
Chant but one true tender
Song, and its winged splendour
Back to thee shall render,
Yea, though life be friendless,
Joy deeper than thy dream.

FAR BEHIND.

Far behind the early
Youthful meadows gleam :
Wonderful lost places
Full of sweet fair faces,—
Skies o'er which the pearly
Soft cloud-clusters stream.

All is far behind us :
We are marching on
Towards it may be sweeter

Summers, passions fleeter ;
Summer flowers may find us,—
But what flowers are gone !

Gone, yea gone for ever
Where the sunsets go ;
Where the sunrise-splendour,
Infinitely tender,
Fades to sleep,—and never
Quite the same doth glow.

Is there use in glancing
O'er the long strange road,—
Dwelling on the fancies,
Unfulfilled romances,
That like sea-waves dancing
Countless round us glowed ?

Is there use in wondering
Where the dream-scents go ?
Now that we are older
And life's skies gleam colder
Is there good in pondering
What once moved us so ?

Ah, the old vales of wonder,
Sweet old flower-filled vales !
Where are now your posies,
All your white sweet roses ?
At the midday thunder
Every old valley pales.

For our life in midday,
Yea, in burning noon,
Halts beside some fountain,

Half-way up the mountain ;
Early mists that hid day
At the sun's heat swoon.

Marching towards the ending,
In the midst we wait :
Halt our forces, gazing
Down the heights amazing,
Blue dim slopes extending
Far towards life's first gate.

Down the rocks we, weary,
Gaze and wonder much
How we ever reached them,
How our cannon breached them ;
How the cliff-sides dreary
Yielded at our touch.

Half-way up the mountain,
Here, in calm, we stand :
Still the summit hideth,
Still its mist derideth ;
By the midway fountain
Wait we, hand in hand.

Halting, swift remembrance
Flies on sudden wings
Backward down the alleys
Into green lost valleys,
Perished beyond semblance,
Where a lost love sings.

Backward into splendour
Of the early days
Shoot the plumes of yearning,

Towards the soft vales turning ;
Towards the pure soft tender
Green still valley-ways.

Beautiful past speaking
Those far valleys gleam :
Wonderful and holy,
Filled with streamlets lowly,—
Streams the blue sea seeking
Where the white waves dream.

Exquisite the rapture
Of the early days,
Now so far behind us
That it fails to find us ;
Yea, we fail to capture
Scent of the old sprays.

Oh, such leagues lie stretching
Out their weary length
'Tween us and the early
Clouds so grey and pearly,
We've no power of fetching
Back past passion's strength !

Nought is left but onward,
Ever on, to go :
Up the high hills yonder
Towards the home of thunder ;
Starward, heavenward, sunward,
Towards the high sky's glow.

What is left but yearning,
Struggling, to the end ?
Not again reposes

In the vales of roses
One fierce spirit burning
Upward e'er to tend !

What is left but motion
O'er the high dry sod ?
What is left but vigour
In the blue air's rigour ?
Lone on life's mid-ocean,
What is left but God ?

THOUGH THE DAY BE DREARY.

Though the day be dreary,
Even comes apace,
The ending of the race,
The sight of sweet love's face
So restful to the weary.

Though the day be burning,
Yet shall night succeed,
And darkness soft give heed
To us in utter need,
Responsive to our yearning.

When the day is over,
Comes the scent of sand
Touched by the wet sea's hand
To heal the burnt-up land,
And waft of cliff-top clover.

And brightness of thy face
O love, O woman tender,
Thy soul's clear endless splendour,
And all thy love can render
Of soft redeeming grace.

TO VENUS.

An experiment in rhyme.

Wonderful exquisite bowers of the flowers of the passions,
 Tender the splendour ye render in marvellous fashions :
 Bright the delight of your white to our eyesight Thalassians.

Sweet are thy feet that retreat being fleet through the posies,
 Venus, that lover-like cover like myriads of roses
 The ways and the bays and the sprays where thy body
 reposes.

Wonder of thunder can sunder and sever from thee
Never a mortal : immortal thy portal of sea
Gleameth and beameth and streameth with laughter and glee.

Flower-like and bower-like, roseshower-like, we pray thee to
save,
Venus, our soul from the goal and the roll of the wave
Swirling and curling and whirling us fast to the grave.

By thy body most beautiful, dutiful, now we beseech
Heal us and save : by thine hair and sweet air of the beach
Whence thou risest sublime to our clime, give us time, room
and reach.

Give our rhyme, Venus, time and sublime it till worthy it be
Of thy face and thy grace and the place where we tarry for thee,
Where the sound without bound now is found of thy limitless sea.

With mouth like the South when the drouth of the terrible day
Is ended and blended with splendid unspeakable spray
Of rain and of mist, be the souls of us kissed, so we pray.

Be our blossom, O bosom, our fragrant and tenderest rose :
Enfold us and hold us and mould us,—not one of us knows
Till thou dost surrender how tender thy splendour, love,
glows.

MANY LOVES, AND VENUS.

Wonderful and delicate in seeming

Is this girl fair ?

Lo ! yet another hath eyes gleaming

Through blackest hair,

And yet another hath eyes dreaming,

And sweetest air.

Which is tenderest and best and sweetest ?

The white-limbed maid ?

Which sways passion's harp with finger fleetest ?

Which hand hath played
Love's melody with ecstasy completest,
And most hearts swayed ?

Beautiful the golden tresses
That blind the sun !
Tender are the white caresses
By strong hearts won.
And yet the swift and searching soul confesses
Not all is done !

O delicate and soft brown glances,
O eyes of blue,
From each to each the vision dances,—
For each sweet hue
Sweetness of the former tint enhances
And makes each new.

Lips with all the scent of roses,
 And arms that bring
The thrilling sense of woodland posies
 When close they cling,
And breast wherein the violet reposes,—
 You, you, I sing !

Yet there comes a woman fairer,
 With hair that smells
Of blossoms unbeholden, rarer,—
 She brings the dells
Of long-lost lands to view, the bearer
 Of asphodels.

She with limitless soft splendour
 Passes along
Our nerves with touching as of tender

Outbursts of song :
Fragrance she brings that doth engender
Ecstasy strong.

Far beyond beauty of the others
She now is seen ;
The old flowers were but as weaker brothers,
Feeble of mien,
To those her splendid bosom mothers,
Fostering, serene.

Low we bend and do adore her,
For now we know
The awful fragrance floating o'er her
Shoulders of snow ;
Venus it is : we fall before her,
Saying, "Sweet, even so !"

CHRIST AND BEAUTY.

Christians.—Tender to the weary-footed climber,
Comes the voice of Saviour Christ sublimer—

Greeks.—Beauty's face,
Radiant on the morning-dazzled mountains,
Sweet beside the dim fern-hidden fountains—

Ch.—In each place
Now the glory flames of the Redeemer,
Cease, O weary world, to be a dreamer—

Gr.—And embrace

Not a rose, but sweeter than the roses
Venus' body that the night discloses—

Ch.—Interlace

Weary hands around the Saviour's shoulders,
Take no part with mocking mere beholders—

Gr.—Nor disgrace

Manhood by forsaking her our lady,
Sweet within the olive-thickets shady—

Ch.—Lo ! the race

Leading to the golden-hued far portal
Now begins for every true-foot mortal—

Gr.—Nay, the chase

After white limbs through the yielding thickets,
Dashing fast aside the chirping crickets—

Ch.—Rather brace

Steady thews to climb the mountains colder,
Where the lofty sunrise flasheth golder—

Gr.—Softer grace

Than of sun or moon we have, O mortals,
Waiting sweet within the still night's portals—

Ch.—We displace

All the older gods by newer splendour
Gleaming round about the Christ-crown tender—

Gr.—Nay, *we* raise

Brilliant in the morning light our banner,
Sweet as ever in the sweet old manner—

Ch.—Christ displays

Sunlike splendid rustless sword that gleameth,
Moonlike whiter dustless flag that beameth—

Gr.—But the ways
Ever sweet, are sweeter now they fold her
In their rose-hung hedges and behold her—

Ch.—Nay, the sprays
Drip with noble blood of Christ redeeming,
With his blood the hedge-row thorns are gleaming—

Gr.—And *we* trace
By the tender buds that spring about her
Where *she* passes ; not one rose without her—

Ch.—Life obeys
Ever mandate of the Christ, arising
In new wondrous ways and modes surprising—

Gr.—Summer days
Follow Venus, flushing with fair weather
Every hill and dale we roam together—

Ch.—But the bays

Bluer shine for Christ upon the water ;

Dead she is, their lewd god's lewder daughter—

Gr.—Nay, she sways

Ever as of old the shining beaches,

And the far-stretched glittering foam-winged reaches—

Ch.—Let our lays

Rather rise to God's own Son, the Victor ;

Serpentine and as a snake-constrictor—

Gr.—Her arms graze ;

Yes,—we own it, love it, love to know it,

Not for Christ's embrace would we forego it—

Ch.—Lo ! we praise

Ever arms of Christ the Victor, singing

Eager psalms and round about him clinging—

Gr.—No delays

Keep us from the tender-scented hollow

Whence there rings the love-voice that we follow—

Ch.—Ye amaze

All our hearts, O people, by your daring ;

Know ye not the flames that are preparing—

Gr.—Nay, the blaze

Deep within our spirits of deep passion

Flameth in the old and quenchless fashion—

Ch.—Christ's voice says,

“Come unto me, all ye spirits weary,

Spent with bearing deathful days and dreary”—

Gr.—Love conveys

Even a tenderer and sweeter message,

For she gives herself as sweetest presage—

Ch.—The gift weighs

Little with us, for we follow after

Tender ringing of Christ's silver laughter—

Gr.—Which betrays :

While the white long limbs of pliant Venus

From all storms of earth and heaven screen us

In their maze.

•

ONCE : THEN NO MORE.

I.

Once shines the sweet dawn o'er the ocean spaces,
 Once flames the sunlight on the laughing shore,—
 Once life is gladdened by true friendly faces,
 Once : then no more.

II.

Once love with tender beauty through life's valleys
 Passes, once lays soft hand upon life's door ;
 Once from the green ravine white Venus sallies ;
 Once : then no more.

III.

Once fame twines bays, or love her sweeter fairer

Rose-crown that all the souls of men adore ;

Once rings Apollo's voice, than music rarer ;

Once : then no more.

IV.

Once we are lifted by the wild emotion

That through our veins life's splendid vistas pour ;

Once gleams, superb for us, the blue broad ocean ;

Once : then no more.

V.

Once tender sound of exquisite low laughter

Echoes ; once swift lips meet and pain is o'er ;

Once passion crowns us,—once and never after,—

Once : then no more.

MEMORY.

Sweet face that gazest down the glade,
Searching the solemn aisles of shade ;—
Are past dreams dead, past hopes betrayed ?

Was once thine heart a blossom fair,
Laughing within life's spring-like air,—
Is life now over-hard to bear ?

Thine eyes are pensive ; whither stream
The swift sad thoughts whose wild wings gleam
Across thine heart : what is thy dream ?

Ah ! was it by some summer sea
That love's bright hand laid hold of thee,
Fast hold,—and thou in vain did'st flee ?

And dream'st thou now of waves that broke
Nigh someone's footstep when he spoke
And bowed thy spirit to his yoke ?

Or was it 'mid the meadow-sweet
In some soft mossy green retreat
Where thou could'st hear thine own heart beat ?

In such spot came the conquering tread
Of love,—who bound about thine head
His tender wreath of roses red ?

Are all the roses white to-day,
Now love's frail foot has fled away
And left the woods and seashore grey ?

Thou musest surely on such things,
And round about thy spirit clings
A memory whose mere faint touch stings.

A memory of those woods and seas
Wherethrough once lingered passion's breeze
And love's soft laughter ; *where are these ?*

THERE COMES AN END OF ALL.

I.

Of joy, of summer days, of sweetness,
Of leaf-perfection, flower-completeness,

There comes an utter end :

All songs, all days of calm or laughter,
Are followed by a blank hereafter

Towards which their footsteps tend :

No matter towards what heaven we call,
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

II.

Of pleasure, happiness, soft weeping,

Of eager action, weary sleeping,

There comes alike the close :

To soft slim flower by roadside hilly,

To great majestic garden lily,

To red majestic rose,

To larkspur blue, alert and tall,

There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

III.

There comes an end of all their glory ;

Their petals fade, wax faint and hoary,

Are mixed with autumn hues :

The dying lessening woods are splendid,

Yet the bright tints throughout them blended

Are those that death's lips choose :

The yellow loosened thin leaves fall ;

There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

IV.

There comes an end to noble summers ;
Others flame forth, gay-garbed new-comers
 With fire upon their cheeks ;
But these too in the end lose gladness,
They mix their flower-like souls with sadness,
 They wither at cold weeks ;
They dwindle 'neath the autumnal pall ;
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

V.

So is it with the green spring-hedges
And all the laughing river-edges
 Whereby the glad nymphs roam :
So is it with the seas whose brightness
Vies with the sea-born goddess' whiteness,
 The waves that guard her home ;
Though blue glad waves her bowers inwall,
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

VI.

So is it with all lovers' splendour ;
One day the love-god's hand is tender,—
The next day where is he ?
Is not the next night starless, moonless,
The love-couch cold, the bleak airs tuneless,
Barren the waste wide sea ?
Though May's soft foot our loves forestal,
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

VII.

To-day the woman's kiss falls sweetly,
Captive she holds her love completely
And thrills him with her hair :
She is gone, she is flown away to-morrow,
And, for the sound of song, shrill sorrow
Sits wildly wailing there ;
Fate gives too soon for honey, gall ;
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

VIII.

To-day the bright girl's words are gracious,
She leads the way through wood-glades spacious,
Her white hand leads love on ;
She is changed and cold and all untender
Next morn,—and all that woodland splendour,
Lacking her grace, is gone ;
The silent flowerless glades appal ;
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

IX.

One day soft meadow-sweet abundant
Makes all the still dear woods redundant
With still intense perfume :
The next day all the North wind's madness
Has wrenched away the green woods' gladness,
Scattered the white flowers' bloom ;
Fate's hand doth even the woods enthrall ;
There comes an end, there comes an end of all.

X.

The blue sea with soft ripples ringeth
To-day, and hardly one cloud wingeth
Above the waves its way ;
At night the black storm's evil warning
Scowls in the West,—grim tides next m
Scour all the sands for prey ;
Far up their boats the fishers haul ;
There comes an end, there comes an end of

XI.

So too of sorrow itself an ending
Comes some day ; towards that goal we
Lift up our hearts in praise,
Grateful that change itself not ever
Shall last,—that foiled downcast endeav
Shall rest in quiet ways :
Of days that leap, or groan and crawl,
There comes an end, there comes an end of

XII.

There comes an end of sweetest treasure
Joy gathers up, of sorrow's measure,—
 Of grief's low weary strain ;
Of kisses God himself might covet
From mouth so sweet that God might love it ;
 Of parting's speechless pain ;
Of vain attacks on Fate's grim wall ;
There comes the end, there comes the end of all.

JUNES AND DECEMBERS.

I.

Was it in June by woodland deep
That first love's soft enchanted sleep
Fell on the weary eyes that weep
 This morning ?
Was it when summer wrapt the hills
In tender mist, and slender rills
Danced down the dales a torrent fills,
 Love-scorning ?

II.

Or did some girl make winter fair
With softest flush of flowerlike hair,
Draped in the scents the spring-months wear

With laughter ?

Did all November smile to note
Pure tresses round the white neck float,
Though sorrow's wings with strokes that smote

Swept after ?

III.

Was wintry night a summer dream ?
Did flowers upon the bright lips teem,
The moon above the lovers gleam

With splendour ?

Or was it where the soft tufts are
Of meadow-sweet that softer far
Her white hand glittered like a star,

So tender ?

IV.

Was winter banished when her face
Made June-delight of all the place,
And summer gladness through her grace
Shone splendid ?
Didst thou, O lover, feel that flowers
Are but for summer heedless hours,—
That on no skies are woman's bowers
Dependent ?

V.

What need hast thou of summer now ?
It smiles upon her cool clear brow ;
June laughs upon her lips, I vow,
Rose-blended !
If, waiting thee within thy bower,
Thou hast thy passionate woman-flower
She makes all days, yea, every hour
Love-splendid.

VI.

Divine with joy each hour she makes :
Thou needst not hunt spring through the brakes
Nor groan at eddying wild snow-flakes
Excessive ;
Thou wilt not find one day too long
For love's sweet laughter, passion's song,—
Nor whistling blasts of North wind strong,
Oppressive.

VII.

What matters how the day may pass,
Or icicles on wintry grass,
If so the night's sweet hours amass
More pleasure ?
It may be winter through the day,
But August-tresses round thee stray
At eve, and June-hands for thee play
Love's measure.

VIII.

The great moon at the window-pane
Some thought of winter doth retain ;
The waves their wintry troubled strain
 Are singing ;
But love's dear couch within is spread
And heaped with summer petals shed
Not now on grass or mossy bed,
 Soft-clinging.

IX.

O holier night than nights of stars
Which over summer heavens their car
Drive—night that snappest countless
 For ever,
What is the summer unto thee ?
The white rose that awaiteth me
Summer on bank or lawn or lea
 Held never.

X.

No summer tenderest scent was e'er
As soft as that which in thine hair
Lurks, making heaven of all the air

I'm breathing :

No summer night was sweet as this,
Crowned with thine own close clinging kiss
And circled with the unfathomed bliss

Thou art wreathing.

XI.

Thou art my June, my summer, sweet,—
My flowerful exquisite retreat
Where, after months of toil and heat,

I rest me :

Thou art my bower of pure delight
Wherein I gather through the night
Soft mystic bloom :—oh, with love's might

Invest me !

XII.

Crown me with love thou summer rose
Though nigh our sleep the cold wind
It will not reach us as it goes

Sea-seeking :

Yea, nought can reach us now of pair
Within this holy wondrous fane
Where tender summer's lips again
Are speaking.

THOU ART NOT THERE !

I.

The woods are bright to-day,
The storms have fled away,
The sea smiles in the bay,
 The corn shakes golden hair ;
New maidens pass along
The woods with laugh and song,
White flowers the green glades throng,
 But still thou art not there !

II.

Wide fields the very same
Beneath the hot sun flame
Where once we, flower-crowned, ca
 New tender lips are fair ;
The old unchanged blue seas
Shine in the same soft breeze,
The same grass clothes the leas,
 But still thou art not there !

III.

Is it not strange and sad
That when these flowers are glad,
And waves with mirth are mad,
 And laughter thrills the air,
Is it not strange, O queen,
That thou shouldst not be seen
Threading the wood-glades green,—
 That thou shouldst not be t

IV.

How can the flowers be white
If thou, their spirit bright,
Dost linger out of sight,
 Heedless of all our care ?
How can our laughter long
Fill the wide woods, and song
Surge with the breakers strong,
 If, still, thou art not there !

V.

Art thou not traitor, rose,
To every flower that blows,
To every breeze that goes
 Along the cliff-side bare ?
Art thou not false to these,
To flower, to cliff, to breeze,
Which worship at thy knees,
 In that thou art not there !

VI.

Art thou not false to me ?

Lo ! I am the wide sea,

The blossom at thy knee,

The singing North wind rare

Art thou not false and weak ?

The rose upon thy cheek,

Love, if it could, would speak,

And urge thee to be there !

VII.

That rose would surely claim

Some memory of my name ;

Upon thy cheek that flame

Doth hidden love declare :

The tears are in thine eyes,

Coloured as those old skies,

Which heard our passionate sighs,

When thou, first love, wast !

VIII.

When thou wast in the sky,
And in the night wind's sigh,
And in the flowers that try,
 In vain, thy bloom to wear ;
When thou wast in my heart,
Thrilling with tender dart
Its depth, its every part,—
 When thou, sweet queen, wast there !

IX.

Oh, be thou there again ;
Hear this far lyric strain ;
Sever the years of pain,
 Of woe so hard to bear :
Be thou once more the flower
Those sacred woods imbower,
Yea, thrill them with thy power,
 They'll bloom when thou art there !

X.

The seas are yearning, sweet,
To ripple round thy feet ;
The odorous green retreat

Thy flower-sweet breath wo
Ne'er will one summer true
Turn the waste skies to blue
And give the old sunsets' hue,
Till, once more, thou art th

XI.

The old moon this very night
Upon the cliffs is bright ;
Be thou their blossom white,

Thy glory, love, prepare :
The stars have need of thee ;
Thy love, the singing sea,
Doth whisper unto me
That thou, sweet, wilt be th

XII.

The blossoms cannot bloom
Without thee ; through the gloom
That hems us like a tomb

 The songless cold stars stare :
Lo ! on the cliffs I stand,
Awaiting thy white hand
To unlock lyric land,—

 Oh, wilt not thou be there ?

TEN YEARS.

I.

Ten years of flowers and songs and

What profit hath the soul of these ?

What spirit of gladness in the trees

Abideth ever ?

What hath the soul the force to clas

In swift undying eager grasp,

Yea, hold though death's rough fing

And part with never ?

II.

What hath the soul the power to take
As new bright crimson mornings break,
And in the breeze the rushes shake

And laugh for gladness ?

What lingereth of the loves who went
Adown life's valleys well content
And with the sacred sunsets blent
Their share of sadness ?

III.

Now all the suns have passed away
And left life's valleys gaunt and grey,
What word of hope is left to say,
What word of greeting ?
Ten years of bowers and rose-sweet days
And sorrow's tears in hidden ways
And tender honey-suckle sprays,
How swift, how fleeting !

IV.

Ten years have passed : their flowers have
Their every gallant rose is dead,
Not one now lifts a laughing head
 High gazing sunward ;
The blue seas shine,—but, not the seas
Which rippled 'neath the ten years' breeze
The green leaves quiver, and the trees
 Pass sunlight onward.

V.

But what remains of flowers or sweet
Gold crowns of tender cliff-side wheat ?
What white hands for our hands to meet,
 Hands sweet as clover ?
What bowers of beauty yet remain
Unsmitten by the ten years' rain,
What lips for eager lips to gain,
 Now all is over ?

VI.

Death looms in front : what loves behind

Breathe passion on the balmy wind !

What shall our further footsteps find

Of splendid passion ?

What rose sublime upon the track

Waits, nobler than the flowers we lack

And yearn for, burn for, gazing back

In eager fashion ?

VII.

No days had value save the days

When love's foot trode the flowerful ways ;

No flowers are sweet save those that raise

Soft heads resplendent

Towards love's caressing subtle hand,

Which brings delight to sea and land,

Adorns with bloom the barren strand

On love dependent.

VIII.

If this be so, what future waits
Our heart beyond the ten years' gates ?
What new loves, passions, sorrows, hates,
 Swift disappointment ?
What tenderest resting through the night
On very love's soft bosom white ?
What climbing towards a kingly height,
 What proud anointment ?

IX.

The hand of death it may be gleams,
Ending all loves and hopes and dreams,
Where some not far-off morning beams—
 Death's hand there lingereth
Eager, a foeman sinewy, tall,
He summons without bugle-call,
And while he grimly waiteth all,
 His sword he fingereth.

X.

But there are fingers sweeter far
Than death's cold grisly fingers are ;
Beneath no sun, beneath night's star
The soft hand waiteth :
It toucheth like a touching rose,
And sends the tingling blood in throes
Past speaking sweet through heart that glows
As pain abateth.

XI.

And there are flowers that blossom still
In green secluded vale, or fill
With sweetness all the thymy hill,
Though gone for ever
Are ten years' buds and ten years' bloom,
Swallowed within the unopening tomb
Whose fierce lips seize each year's perfume
And yield it never.

XII.

And there are faces tender yet,
Though gone past hope are those we met
When still the morning dewes were wet
On fern and daisy :
Though now life's noon sucks up the dew
And cloudless burns the midday blue,
Love's bloom of face hath sweeter hue
Than morn-tints hazy.

Oct. 20, 1880.

NOT ONE ?

Of the roses that thine hands have handled
 In sweet past days,
 Days of gentle summers golden-sandalled,
 Are there no strays ?

Not a petal for my heart to foster,
 O love, O queen,—
 Did every blossom perish when I lost her,
 My flower serene ?

Hast thou not a single blue sky, gleaming

Divine for me ?

Not a starry night, a moon-ray dreaming

Above our sea ?

Not a thought, a kiss, a dear look tender

Seeking my gaze ?

One vision of the swift eyes' splendour,

Their deep sea-rays ?

One vision of the white bright shoulder,—

Love, only one ?

For is not all my dead life colder

Without its sun ?

A little thing it is,—and can it harm thee,

This little thing ?

Just once to let the love-god warm thee

With warm soft wing ?

Yea, once to let the love-god hold thee
 White breast to breast ;
To let his radiant arms enfold thee,
 One hour be blest.

Rose-lips, upon my own lips settle !
 Sweet face, come near !
Thou art flaming like a pink rose-petal ;
 Oh, have no fear !

Flower-mouth, upon my own mouth glisten ;
 Be not afraid ;
The love-god's ears, and not another's, listen—
 Unwind that braid.

Let the dark hair ripple round the shoulder,
 The shoulder thrill ;
Let kiss by kiss wax passionate and bolder ;
 Obey love's will.

MY BLOSSOM OF GOLD.

Have the days that are past, brought splendour
The long nights rest ?
Hath passion been nigh thee with tender
And succouring breast ?

Oh, many are the buds that have blossomed
On hill-side and lea
Since the glades of the green woods embosom
Sweet love, you and me

Not a night but a rose hath gladdened
 With splendour of bloom
Some garden for lack of her saddened—
 That sighed for perfume.

Not a day but a lily with gracious
 And infinite scent
Hath blessed the bright avenues spacious
 Where love's foot went.

Year after year they are bursting,
 The glad bright buds,
To fill with their bounty the thirsting
 And blossomless woods.

Last night did a rose in my garden,
 A mere bud at eve,
Burst calyx : it stands now a warden,
 Doth homage receive.

And, lady, will never a season

Descend upon me,

When all the dark wings of love's treason

Shall rustle and flee ?

Last night there were locks interwreathing

And lips joined in one,

And exquisite blending of breathing

And passion-heights won.

What blossoms of infinite number

Have bloomed and have fled

Through the years of our passionless slumber,

While we were as dead !

What scents we are all unaware of

Have gladdened the night !

What splendour that we had no share of—

What joy, what delight !

Dark hair hath been mingled with golden,

Sweet lily with rose,

Bright bosom by passion enfolden,—

Love born amid throes,—

While we have been lingering, dreaming,

And watching the days

Far past us and over us streaming ;

Sole-loving in lays.

Rise : ere the cold dews are upon us

That death's lips breathe

Let the splendour of passion pass on us,

Bright blossoms inwreath

Be thou the dear rose in my garden

Unwedded so long,

That the night-winds of absence would harden

Were it not for my song

Be thou the dear rose in my bosom

O woman, to-night ;

My passionate exquisite blossom !

My love, my delight !

My glory, my bounty, my splendour,

My blossom of gold,

More sweet and superb in surrender

Than ever of old.

Oct. 25, 1880.

L'ENVOI.

THOU ART ALIVE !

Somewhere i' the world to-day
Thou breathest,—and yon spray
 Of honeysuckle is sweeter
Since thou hast passed that way.

Thou wakest at the morn
And I am less forlorn,—
 And summer airs are fleeter,
Thy voice along them borne.

Thou sleepest in the night
And all my heart is light,
 Bending above thee dreaming
Soft dreams, with face grown bright.

Thou art alive ! yon rose
The sweet sweet secret knows ;
 Its crimson flush is gleaming
More crimson as it blows.

Thou livest, and the flowers
Are fairer on their bowers ;
 Softer the spring-like valleys,
Tenderer the fresh spring-showers :

Yea, richer all the flush
Of May,—the rose's blush,—
 Greener the dim moist alleys
Wherethrough the white streams rush.

More exquisite the light
Of summer, when the white
Or crimson dense May-blossom
Gives place to roses bright.

Thou art alive ! and so
Summer may safely glow
With warm brown beating bosom
O'er which the warm winds blow.

And autumn too is fair,
Kissed by thy waving hair :
Thou treadest autumn meadows,
In clear blue kindling air.

The tender autumn dreams
Of thee and round thee gleams,—
Yea, crowns thee with soft shadows
And pearl-grey sunset-beams.

And winter too for thee

Is full of revelry ;

No more the plains are chilling,—

The snow smiles on the tree.

Thy shapely warm white hand

Gives life to lake and land :

Winter with love is thrilling

At thy most sweet command !

Thou art alive, and bliss

Doth blossom in thy kiss ;

Still may thine utmost splendour

Be given,—yea, even this !

Alive thou art, and sweet

Within thy far retreat ;

Alive, thou canst be tender

And every pulse may beat.

Thy whole dear body may
The force of love obey,—
 Leap, thrill, and burn for rapture,—
Turn night to heavenlier day.

Turn day to gentler night
With warmth of bosom white ;
 A sweeter thing to capture
Than any blossom bright.

Thou mayest, alive and strong,
Turn passion's breath to song,
 And tune love's voice to tender
Low bursts of rapture long.

Thy very breath a rose,
Thy form a breeze that blows
 Straight from far islets' splendour,—
Thy secret what man knows ?

Thou art alive to burn

With joy at every turn :

To thrill with love's sweet madness :

To tremble, weep and yearn :

To fling thy beauty's crown,

Passionate, heedless, down ;

To loosen, wild with gladness,

Those locks of gleaming brown :

To clasp a trembling man

With body white and wan,

 Made pale with utter yearning—

Though rose-red, love began :

To tightly wind in sleep

Thy tresses soft and deep

 Around thy lover, burning

His veins that laugh and leap.

Thou art alive for this !
Thou art left on earth to kiss ;
 God keeps thee, sweet, yet living
That thou mayest grant me bliss.

That thou mayest set thy mouth,
Like red fruit from the South,
 Upon mine own, forgiving
The long long years of drouth.

That thou mayest set thine eyes
Upon me like soft skies ;
 That I may feel thy bosom
So softly fall and rise.

That I may know how white
Thou art to eager sight ;
 How sweet a woman-blossom
To handle with delight.

That I may know how fair
Thy beauty, white and bare,
 Can shine upon a lover ;
How subtle-soft, how rare !

That I may, wondering much
As thee, my queen, I touch
 And all thy glory uncover,
Laugh low to find thee such.

Laugh low and soft to find
New odours on the wind ;
 Strange amorous scents that gladden
The ardent Eastern mind.

Laugh soft and low to hear
New music in mine ear ;
 Sweet music-tones that madden,
And bring lost heaven-joy near.

Smile tenderly to see
The utter bloom of thee,
 A naked rose soft-glowing—
No rose of hill or lea.

But fairer, fairer far
Than any blossoms are,
 By lake or wood-side blowing,
Or in untrodden star !

Thou art alive for *me* !
Yea, for our old sweet sea
 With tender waves to cover,
Seeking, for Venus, thee.

Thou art alive : I come,
O flower in perfect bloom,—
 Thine old unchanged swift lover
Emerging from time's tomb !

Oct. 31, 1880.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

MR. BARLOW'S POEMS.

"Mr. George Barlow's 'Poems and Sonnets' is, in several respects, a clever and remarkable book. . . . Mr. Barlow has a peculiar gift for quaint and captivating titles. 'The Ecstasy of the Hair,' 'My Own Dart,' 'Blue Weather,' 'Death's Lips and Palms,' 'To have Beheld,' are felicitous and suggestive fancies. . . . This would scarcely have been remarked, did it arise from lack of power to perfect. From the evidence of his better work, we are convinced that the author has all that is needful of such power, to make of the many *eidola* of good things that sprinkle his volume, real embodiments of genius. Such evidences are not rare. . . . Mr. Barlow has, however, sterling qualities that compensate even these crudities ; and if we have been particular in the enumeration of his faults, it is that these qualities are great enough to merit care in their culture—care in their liberation from the occasional clumsiness that obscures them. If Mr. Barlow be a young man, his career is to a great measure in his own hands."—BLANCHARD JERROLD, in *Lloyd's News*.

"To the Rossetti subdivision, we think, the volume before us belongs. It has the loving yearning after loveliness which characterises the writers referred to, but it has no obscurity, and it has a fine human sentiment

of its own. There is, also, a sympathy with nature which evidently is not assumed, not accepted at second-hand, but which bursts forth from the inner personality of the writer. The verse, if not great, is uniformly sweet, and (which is a virtue) we can all follow its meaning."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

"A new singer to us is Mr. Barlow, but one who unquestionably fingers the chords of his harp with a delicate, reverential, and, withal, somewhat masterly touch. His theme is love, with variations; and charmingly and archly he discourses upon that ancient but ever new topic, owning apparently inexhaustible resources within himself of heart-melody. His laudations of beauty have nothing in them that is sickening or sensual; on the contrary, they are moderate and graceful. His sentiment is not less tender than true and pure; his thoughts of beauty are refining and elevating. He has less mannerism than most of the young writers in the present day, and shows a generous appreciation of others, which is, to a certain extent, some proof of merit in himself."—*Public Opinion*.

"The author expresses his admiration of American Society for being free from 'the pruning of Convention's hand,' but it is much to be regretted that he has forborne to apply more of such pruning to his own work. . . . There are grace and melody in the pieces entitled, 'Reminiscence' and 'The Discovery of Love,' and another called 'The Waking of Beauty' shows a genuine worship, which ought some time to bear worthier fruit."—*Spectator*.

"Mr. Barlow has probably, without knowing it, been influenced by the feeling of the day. And a man may resemble another in his style without having read him. Influences are, as it were, in the air. The series of poems 'Under the Gaslight,' appears to us to represent much of the spirit of the rising generation of poets. Mr. Barlow writes not merely fluently, but with a command of both language and thought. His ideas are thoroughly under his control. Again, the series of poems 'Christ is not Risen,' well represent much of the spiritual unrest—for we have no better title—of the day. It would be utterly impossible, judging by the present volume, to say what Mr. Barlow may do. His verse is full of promise."—*Westminster Review*.

"Mr. Barlow is a poet of no mean capacity, whose muse is specially devoted to the somewhat unthankful task of producing sonnets. . . .

In the second part of 'Poems and Sonnets' Mr. Barlow is at his best, and his success in poems of less strict metre than is required for the sonnet is such as to induce us to wish he had avoided the more laborious task. As one of many excellent short pieces we may instance 'A Dream of Roses.' . . . We have read Mr. Barlow's three volumes with interest and pleasure, which is more than can be said of much of the poetry of the day."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

"Mr. Barlow has read poetry, and it is probable that he understands it. There is no evidence in his more serious work of misdirected energies or ill-chosen subjects. . . . His sonnets are of a subject and intention which does not forbid comparison with Petrarch himself."—*Illustrated Review*.

"Mr. Barlow has given us here (in 'Poems and Sonnets') a large number of poems on a very few subjects, and chiefly in one form—the sonnet. 'Sonnets on Love' fill up the first volume; short poems entitled, 'Grains of Sand,' and songs follow, nearly all on the same inexhaustible theme; if we were to give one title to what remains, it would be 'Religious Aspirations and Reflections'. The quality of his work is by no means out of proportion to the quantity. He has not only a fluent pen, but an indubitable gift of beautiful and harmonious, if not commonly powerful, expression. He is no careless workman, trusting to the force of genius alone, and neglecting the strictness of method and the grace of form. Indeed, grace and finish are the conspicuous and prevailing qualities of his poetry, and the number of awkward lines and words put in to save the credit of a rhyme is so small as to be almost unnoticeable. The thoughts expressed in a way so admirable are more often subtle and delicate than strong, though strength is not entirely wanting. In these characteristics the style and the thought are one, or, at least, the style faithfully reflects the texture of the thought. . . . Like other poets of the present day, our author has a word, or rather a good many words, to say on religious subjects. A set of sonnets, entitled 'Christologia,' is devoted to the subject of the Resurrection of Christ; and 'The Cry of the Universe' contains passages of remarkable poetical vigour, but of an extremely anti-ecclesiastical tendency, on the boundless subject of the existence of evil."—*Literary World*.

“Mr. Barlow has succeeded in the difficult task of writing a large number of love-poems without cloying his readers with a surfeit of sweets. Variety has not been sacrificed to unity. . . . Perhaps the most notable feature in Mr. Barlow's work is the capacity which it displays for entering with equal fervour into what we may call, after Mr. Matthew Arnold, the Hellenistic and the Hebraistic modes of approaching beauty and love. This faculty is the more remarkable if, as may be pretty clearly discerned from internal evidence, the writer is a very young man. He can sing with the blithe abandonment of the Greek, as well as with that reverential adoration characteristic of the Hebrew spirit which had mastered the great secret which the bright, limited Greek imagination seems never to have learnt—that the highest love can only be rightly approached from the still higher level of duty. To have apprehended and embodied this truth is something; and for a young poet it is much. But, what is still more, he has perceived and given adequate poetic utterance to the yet wider law that between Hellenism and Hebraism at their highest there can be no opposition;—that at the loftiest level of each they coalesce and are fused into one harmonious whole. . . . Mr. Barlow has given us some songs and lyrical snatches which have the true musical ring. ‘The Enchantress of the Shore,’ ‘Yet how fair,’ ‘August,’ ‘Weeping Alone,’ all show considerable lyrical power, and a genuine feeling for rhythm. . . . Mr. Barlow is, so far as we know, the first English poet who has fully apprehended the poetic truth with which the theistic idea—destined, so far as can be yet foreseen, to be hereafter consciously recognized, as it has hitherto been unconsciously held, as the basis of all possible religious faith—is instinct. . . . Of the religious poems, the two most ambitious are, ‘Christ is not Risen,’ and ‘The Old and the New’. The aim and scope of both are similar. The object of the former, as we are told in an undeniably fine, though perhaps rather florid, prose introduction, is, ‘to show the way back from heaven to earth’. This poem was evidently written under the influence of a reaction from Christian ideas and spiritual enthusiasm towards the sweet, child-like, ancient faith in and love of nature for her own sake. . . . In ‘The Old and the New,’ the writer has attempted, as he says in a prefatory sonnet to the reader, ‘to trace two flowing currents,’—viz., Naturalism

and Christian Revelation—which ‘traverse with unceasing restless speed the ages.’ . . . These poems are full of promise. They clearly show a lively and delicate imagination; considerable musical and rhythmical power; and last, though not least, religious and artistic instincts in harmony with the best tendencies of the day.”—*Human Nature*.

“Mr. Barlow’s chief excellence is the way in which he weaves the world of nature external to him with the fancies of imagination and the feelings of the human heart; hence it is that his poetry, which we can cordially commend to all lovers of the muse, is full of similes drawn from the world of external nature.”—*Standard*.

“Mr. Barlow’s book of sonnets, entitled ‘A Life’s Love,’ reveals earnestness of feeling, refinement of taste, and some aspiration. . . . The endeavour after an elevated artistic ideal is apparent, but the poems are less remarkable for what they are in themselves than suggestive of what their author, with his idealistic tendency and tenderness, and charm of sentiment, may one day produce. . . . Much of the mystic element is perceptible in Mr. Barlow’s verse. . . . It is impossible not to wish well to a young poet whose faults are evidently those of youth and inexperience. When the early subjectiveness of intellect and feeling have progressed into a more objective stage, these slight inartistic blemishes will doubtless disappear. . . . Time is the test to show what real creative power may be behind the downy shoots of the first growth. We shall, however, look forward to Mr. Barlow’s further efforts in the hope that his rôle of poet may not have been undertaken lightly to be abandoned.”—*Antiquary*.

“The perfect English Sonneteer has not yet presented himself to the public. Mr. George Barlow has, perhaps, more than any other modern writer devoted himself to the making of sonnets. . . . From the quantity of sonnets he has written, we should say that he has faith in the style he has adopted, and in himself as the exponent of the style. Whether, however, he is the long-expected perfect sonneteer we doubt, although some of the stanzas in ‘A Life’s Love’ contain some of the most charming and delightful poetry we have read for some time. Mr. Barlow is Petrarchan in manner. We have Petrarchan subtleties and Petrarchan conceits. Petrarch’s sonnets immortalise his love for Laura;

George Barlow's 'Life's Love' is not mentioned by name, but the love is evidently genuine and the lady human. . . . The sonnet entitled 'The Pearl Necklace' is, in our opinion, the brightest and most valuable gem in Mr. Barlow's rich collection."—*Civil Service Review*.

"It is not often a volume of poems exactly fulfils the announcement on the title-page; but 'A Life's Love,' is really what it professes to be. There is plenty of internal evidence that some of these poems were commenced very early in the poet's life, and an allusion to Dickens's grave takes us to recent times. The book consists of 100 pages, each page being devoted to one sonnet, with a title and a pretty pictorial heading. . . . Mr. Barlow's poems have a great deal of happy expression and a certain ring of music."—*Globe*.

"For a specimen of the predominance of the Hebrew spirit let us take the really fine sonnet called 'Love's Unity'. . . . The sonnet is evidently Mr. Barlow's favourite poetic vehicle, and it is perhaps in his sonnets that he is most successful."—*Human Nature*.

"Mr. Barlow's former works—'Poems and Sonnets' and 'A Life's Love'—attracted some attention. If they did not show him to be a great poet, they certainly afforded ample proof that he is a fearless sort of thinker, and possesses a facility—we had almost said a dangerous facility—for versification. The main object of the author of 'Under the Dawn' is at once political and religious. In harmony with the prevailing spirit of our age, he hates everything in the shape of creeds with an utter hatred, and longs to see mind set free from the galling bondage in which they hold their slaves. Also in unison with the time in its desire and determination—despite temporary reactions—to effect great and necessary political reforms, our poet waxes indignant in exposing the wrongs from which men suffer, and at times eloquent in the assertion of man's inalienable rights. Mr. Barlow, indeed, is both republican and free-thinker. . . . The wearers of strait jackets of orthodoxy, therefore, had better—indeed, they are certain—to give 'Under the Dawn' a wide berth. . . . Scattered throughout the volume are some really fine passages, and a few capital pieces. 'Death is Better' contains one or two excellent thoughts, while 'The Planet's Boat Song' shows that the author possesses a rich and powerful imagination."—*Birmingham Morning News*.

“ ‘Christ’s Sermon in the City’ is the most brilliant and most original of a series of poems which point Mr. Barlow out as a singer of the most choice gifts and graces of minstrelsy. He excels most in pictures of external nature, and earth and heaven and sea which grow in beauty as they are touched by the magic of his muse.”—*Evening Standard*.

“The ‘Dedication’ is a singularly beautiful one. . . . We see Mr. Barlow—not perhaps at his best, but nearly at his best in such poems as ‘Abbey Wood,’ and ‘From Blackheath to Gravesend’ . We were first of all inclined to object to the lines

‘A distant prospect sweet beyond compare,
Showing the silver Thames amid its reeds,’

in the former, but after due reflection we decided that Mr. Barlow was right. The Thames opposite Plumstead marshes and Abbey Wood is but a muddy and unlovely stream, but standing on the high ground at Abbey Wood and Belvedere one catches beautiful glimpses of the river at Erith and some distance beyond, and it is no doubt in that direction that Mr. Barlow’s ‘distant prospect’ lies. The first two lines in ‘From Blackheath to Gravesend’ are very truthful, and could not have been better expressed—

‘I journeyed by wild marshes yesterday,
Where lonely bands of wandering cattle fed,
With here and there a straw-stack or a shed,
And all the skies were overhung with grey.’

Anybody who knows the appearance of the marshes in the neighbourhood of Plumstead and Abbey Wood will freely acknowledge that Mr. Barlow has drawn them to the very life.

In reading these last-named poems, we have regretted that Mr. Barlow has not given us more of a similar description, for they show that he is a careful observer of nature, and that he is able to stand alone on ground of his own choosing.”—*Civil Service Gazette*.

“The writer has a very fertile fancy. His power of illustrating an apparently barren subject is really surprising. He has a great mastery over verse, and his diction is rich and artistic. . . . ‘Under the Dawn’ is in many respects so meritorious as an intellectual production as to make us regret deeply that the author is so widely separated from the religious feeling of his country and generation.”—*Irish Times*.

“The opening poem in ‘Under the Dawn’ is liable to the charge of being too highly coloured, but it is withal a daring and vigorous effort. Some of Mr. Barlow’s shorter pieces are very quaint and tender, and one bearing the title : ‘Give me that Rose,’ possesses a lyric beauty and sentiment that gives it a fair claim to an appropriate musical setting. When time has a little dimmed the over bright flame of Mr. Barlow’s fancy, and chastened the fervour of his style, we may expect from his pen poems which will leave more than a mere passing mark upon the poetic literature of the age.”—*Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

“Mr. Barlow is a poet whose works will always command an appreciative audience. He possesses in a rare degree the two essentials of poetry—idea and expression. He thinks well and he writes musically. There is in his style the warmth of Swinburne, the picturesqueness of Wordsworth, and the classic prettiness of Rossetti. . . . Just as there are men with faces alike, so are there poets with thoughts akin. If Mr. Barlow as a poet is akin to Mr. Rossetti, that is the fault of genius, not of Mr. Barlow. But enough of that. . . . ‘Under the Dawn’ should command a large circle of readers. We wish there were more poets like Mr. Barlow—men who write from inspiration, not mere jinglers of rhyme.”—*Perthshire Advertiser*.

“It is very seldom that a poet, even after he has been assailed by the critics, has so good a right to a prose preface as has Mr. George Barlow to that which he has written for his ‘Under the Dawn’. Without intending in the least to raise that fact into prominence, we take occasion to agree with Mr. Barlow on the general question, that there can be no possible objection to the continual use of the catholic expressions for the facts of nature and for human sentiment, as if that involved plagiarism from the other poets who may have treated the same phenomena ; and on the special question, that whether within this sphere or out of it, there is quite sufficient individuality in the author to distinguish him both from Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Rossetti. . . . But apart from any originality of matter, Mr. Barlow’s form and style of expression are quite distinct. He has a great deal of ideality, and also a very definite mode of thinking ; so that he is clear even in his impassioned pieces, and delicate in his most masculine. The ode ‘From a Poet Militant to Mazzini Triumphant’ is, for example, a piece of fine declamation throughout ; but it is also graceful and fresh.

. . . It is evident that, the poetical impulse being granted, a man with a definite and original purpose will not fail to write forcibly. What with other poets is a yearning after humanity and freedom in the abstract is with the author a longing for a special incarnation of the manly virtues, for a free and impassioned exponent of the impulse which dawned in men like Mazzini. It is rare to find a poet taking up a rôle of this character, not identified with any political movement. Strictly speaking, the movement is not even historical, being yet in the future. On both sides, therefore, it is essentially spiritual. Whether visionary or not, the line of thought is striking as a protest against the gross supernaturalism, the physical metaphysics, so to speak, with which spirituality of conception has been too ignorantly identified, and as a vivid anticipation of a more refined and catholic mode of thinking and feeling.”—*Scotsman*.

“‘Under the Dawn’ is the title of a new volume of poems by George Barlow. It is not easy to characterise the position which the author takes in regard to the higher subjects of which he treats. Belonging to the section of the ‘broad’ school, which is, to some extent, represented by Mr. Moncure Conway, he appears to reject dogmatic mankind. Of course, like all theists, who unite with their theology that personal tenderness and faith in a Divine love, which is the only real basis of religion, Mr. Barlow is indebted to the teachings of Christianity for that (let us say unconscious) dogma, from which even he cannot escape. For, after all, dogma is but the form of expression into which strong thoughts are put, and no man can really be without dogma unless he is without opinions. Perhaps the strongest, narrowest, and most tyrannical despotism just now belongs to the asserted infallibility of science, and to the expressions of disbelief. However, Mr. Barlow’s book conveys to the reader so many poetic thoughts, that there was no special need for any declaration of faith. The belief in the Divine goodness and love, and in immortality, suffices for those verses, which touch often sadly and with pathos on the solemn aspects of human life.”—*British Commercial Advertiser*.

“Mr. Barlow has been charged with being a copyist—an echo of Swinburne; but we must say, after a careful perusal of his poems, that the charge is not to be sustained.”—*London Sun*.

“‘Under the Dawn’ will extend the poet’s reputation; anything

more daring has not been printed since Shelley's day."—*Sussex Daily News*.

"There are traces of progress both in Mr. Barlow's workmanship and intellectual grasp that justify us in predicting a high place for him among contemporary poets, if only he struggle against the temptation to carelessness, and be anxious rather to prune and polish than to add. The somewhat lovelorn and despairing utterances of his earlier writings gave way in 'Under the Dawn' to a healthier phase of thought, and the poet finds a nobler theme in contemplating the future hopes of mankind and enlarging on the progress of humanity. It is true that a strain of chivalric devotion and delicate loyalty to women characterises all that Mr. Barlow has written in the earlier poems to which we allude; but that is not enough, and with the wider grasp which he is now attaining he will undoubtedly reach a higher level of poetry than that to which he has hitherto risen."—*Continental Herald*.

"Mr. Barlow being asked by his admirers, of whom he has not a few, to write a poem worthy of his undoubted powers, has given them a long preface, in which he defends himself against various foolish charges. Some time ago, when noticing his 'Poems and Sonnets,' we made some remarks on the general style and tendency of Mr. Barlow's poetry. We thought, and we still think, that it reproduces, in a very remarkable way, many of the thoughts and perplexities which are agitating the minds of the younger generation. To accuse Mr. Barlow of plagiarism is the height of folly. We think that it would have been far better for Mr. Barlow to have left his critics unanswered. Time will decide between him and them. His duty is to be true to his Muse, and not to engage in controversy. . . . His present volume shows a great advance in technical skill. Mr. Barlow still treats subjects from the same spiritual point of view. He appeals not to the mass of men, but to those who are more or less influenced by the spiritualism of the day, such as is found in the writings of Emerson and Theodore Parker. Whether this is only a transient phase of opinion, we will not pretend to say. The best pieces in 'Under the Dawn' are such as 'What Think You?' 'The Spirit of Beauty,' and 'The Old and the New'."—*Westminster Review*.

"Among the few volumes of poems that we have selected for review

this week, Mr. Barlow's 'Under the Dawn' takes the foremost place. Some years have elapsed since we had occasion to speak in very high terms of his sonnets, which were full of promise for the future. . . . There are many fine lines in the first and principal poem—'A Hymn of Love'. It is somewhat difficult to the comprehension occasionally, the adjectives follow closely one upon another in a vehement string, and the thoughts appear confused now and then in a too voluminous command of words. But we are willing to overlook the faults of the redundant style, for the sake of those really poetic glimpses at the varied aspects of the master-passion which may be found in the 'Hymn of Love'. It requires all a poet's self-possession and his genius to deal with the mighty subject which all men at some time in their lives attempt to touch. Just as the sculptor tries his 'prentice hand on a Venus that shall, he hopes, rival the Venus of Milo—the poet sings his first songs on love—the ever-old and ever-new. Mr. Barlow would have us believe, his verse indicates, that he has perhaps passed beyond the sway of the fickle god, but there are tender passages in his hymn that betray him. It is true that he analyses the passion calmly, at times almost methodically, and that analysis is not the usual form the fever takes—but the analysis bursts at times into the enthusiastic laudation that is the true sign in many natures. . . . And beside that picture we place before our readers a few verses from Mr. Barlow's fine poem to 'Mazzini Triumphant'. The lines are stirring and spirited, and with the exception of one or two blemishes in the way of extravagant phraseology the poem is a capital specimen of the enthusiasm left among modern rising poets. . . . Mr. Barlow's book deserves something more than a cursory glance."—*Lloyd's News*.

"We recognise in 'A Hymn of Love,' a smooth and impetuous flow of melody, polished here and elsewhere to the last degree, and with a sensuous delight in the succession of sweet sounds. The exuberance of epithet is another mark of these verses. The resources of the English language are taxed to supply the author's need for new combinations."—*Literary Churchman*.

"'Under the Dawn' is decidedly not the echo of 'Songs before Sunrise,' a few have decried it as ; but neither is it a revolt against the pantheistic creed. Rather, it may be termed the offspring of a union between Theism and the worship of Nature—the production of a mind

wherein materialistic and purely spiritual ideas are blended—perhaps in a manner not far divergent from the truth. . . . Looking at the sonnet called ‘Italy to England,’ and similar compositions, we should say that Mr. Barlow is better calculated to succeed in the lyric than the epic. . . . We like the whole tone of the ‘Ode to Mazzini Triumphant’—a composition which we think disputes with ‘Christ’s Sermon in the City’ the praise of being the finest poem in the volume.”
—*Human Nature*.

“I am happy to see that we have a new ‘birth of time’ and spark of Promethean fire in another poet of most excellent promise, and very considerable performance—Mr. George Barlow, who names his volume of poems ‘Under the Dawn,’ and whose charming verse conveys much sound philosophy, and most beautiful and varied sentiment, with a wholesome scorn for worn-out follies and superstitions.”—HENRY ATKINSON, in the *National Reformer*.

“‘The Two Marriages’ is really a work of talent. The *motif* is original, the treatment artistic. We recommend Mr. Barlow to persevere in the groove he has selected, albeit the subject is scarcely adapted to public representation. *Apropos*, what an odd place to choose for the wind-up of a tragedy—the convent on the Woodstock road! Can Oxford know of the honour done her? What does the Lady Mother say?”—*Whitehall Review*.

“The name of George Barlow is not unknown in the pages of spiritualistic literature. Our readers will doubtless remember some fine passages from his pen both of prose and poetry. Inspired, he is a Spiritualist, but whether or not it would be correct to call him one apart from his genius we do not know. There is in the volume before us poetry of a high order, and some that, once read, will not readily be forgotten. Poetry, however, does not speak to all; it is an intelligible language to those only who are to some extent themselves poets. The writer, to be understood, requires readers of the same spirit as himself. ‘Through Death to Life’ is in three parts. Part I., ‘Earth,’—is divided into ‘Earth Gladdened’ and ‘Earth Darkened’. Part II. is ‘Heaven,’ and Part III., ‘Heaven on Earth’. The theme is love—immortal love. In ‘Earth Gladdened’ we have the eager anticipation of realising the ideal, before afflictions and vicissitudes have sadly convinced the ‘pilgrim of love’ that the way is long and weary. In this

part are three beautiful sonnets under the title of 'Dreams,' which embody what is doubtless an actual truth in the spiritual or inner world. 'Earth Darkened' is despondent. The glory is departed, will it ever return? The flowers die, we all die—Death seems victor! A sonnet entitled 'The Moonlit Island' is a most exquisite picture of the past. In Part II., 'Heaven,' Hope again arises, and the voice of the ideal is once more heard. 'Yes, she *did* hear me, and her eyes were wet.' In 'The Lost Glory' we have an expression of triumphant faith in the Future, as the healer and interpreter of the Present. In 'Heaven on Earth,' Part III., we have the attainment of the ideal."—*Spiritual Notes*.

"'Through Death to Life' is a series of sonnets of more than average value. To be worth anything sonnets should be faultless as gems. 'Love's White Kiss' is a specimen of one that in this respect is all that can be desired."—*Sunday Times*.

"Mr. Barlow possesses rare poetic gifts. He writes with fiery earnestness; his verse is nearly always melodious and flowing; and he has a singular felicity of language."—*Scotsman*.

"This volume ('The Marriage before Death, and other Poems') by George Barlow, is marked by poetical qualities of a high order. 'The Marriage before Death' is 'a tragedy in two scenes,' the main incident being one requiring much delicacy of treatment, which, we are happy to add, is not wanting, whilst the burning passion of love finds powerful expression. . . . The shorter poems in the volume, of which love is the principal theme, either glow with the warmth of tender feeling or throb, as it were, with almost delirious emotion. All are rich in fancy, and brilliant in language."—*Literary World*.

"The versification of the tragedy called 'The Marriage before Death' is harmonious and dignified; the scene in which Diana takes leave of her impassioned lover Francesco rouses our sympathy and inculcates a moral which 'adorns the tale'. The chorus is very happily introduced; it prepares us for the doom that follows the ill-fated loves of the angelic Diana and the republican Francesco. 'Tua-Tua or Rose-Rose,' is founded on a superstition prevailing among certain savage tribes, 'to the effect that if one person considers himself to have been injured by another he may secure an inexorable vengeance by entering the house of the person he desires to punish, devoting him or

her with solemn curses to the Fetish, and then, in the presence of the person so devoted, *killing himself*. After this, the unfortunate object of his vengeance has no possible mode of escape; she or he is handed over to the priests, taken to a lonely spot, and duly sacrificed with all the bitter and bloody rites of their abominable religion'. This subject gives great scope to the poet in delineating the passion of love and that of vengeance, and Mr. Barlow has treated both subjects artistically. There are other poems equally meritorious; all we regret is that, at the present moment, when few writers of tragedy exist, Mr. Barlow does not furnish the stage with one of his works, which, we venture to pronounce, would be as successful on the boards as they are delightful in perusing over a winter fire."—LORD WILLIAM LENNOX, in the *Court Journal*.

"Mr. Barlow writes gracefully and fluently, and though we are afraid that some of his themes are such as to expose his works to the risk of being placed on many a domestic *Index Expurgatorius*, there is nothing gross about his writings, and they possess so many good qualities that they are certain to be enjoyed by all who can appreciate the attractions of harmonious expression and melodious verse. 'The Marriage before Death,' 'Tua-Tua or Rose-Rose,' and several other pieces which assume a dramatic or narrative form, display considerable imaginative power and originality both of conception and treatment. Here and there throughout these as well as the shorter pieces, he gives in a line or two—or a mere phrase—little word-pictures full of suggestiveness, and conveying a much more vivid impression than pages of elaborate description. In the series of graceful sonnets entitled 'The Religion of Art,' he gives expression to a religion, which is, at all events, finely idealised. Its nature is, perhaps, most definitely indicated in the sonnet entitled 'The Artist'."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

"The whole of the sonnets in the series entitled 'To Gertrude in the Spirit World' proclaim Mr. Barlow a poet. There is a tenderness of feeling, a wealth of expression and imagination, a music, a grace, a pathos, with an inexpressible longing and yearning that proclaim the writer no ordinary man."—*Perthshire Advertiser*.

"Mr. Barlow is already favourably known to readers of recent verse by several volumes. His work displays a passionate intensity and vividness in the appreciation of beauty and picturesqueness. Mr.

Barlow is utterly removed from anything that we call classic, and multiplies his descriptions, and amplifies his word-paintings with fiery zeal. He has decidedly a real gift for harmonious verse and a keen ear for metre and rhythm, but we should not be surprised if his gift in those directions led him to trust more to mere music than is advisable; and we may state that some of his pages are less noticeable for deep thought than for sweetness of melody. However, we will add that there is not, on the whole, a dearth of ideas in the volume before us. If Mr. Barlow will give a wide berth to word-juggling and calm his heated language a little, we may expect some good art from him. We may be excused from entering upon an analysis of the poem ('The Marriage before Death') which gives its name to the book; for if it were put into plain words it would give an unfair idea of the poem, which has real merit. . . . The two pieces of 'Love's Early Music' are certainly full of beauty, and, though exaggeratedly passionate, are really poetical in conception. . . . The series of sonnets—'To Gertrude in the Spirit World,' 'To Helen,' 'The Genius of Solomon,' 'The Religion of Art,' and 'The Melody of Life,'—display ability of various degrees; some of the sonnets to 'Gertrude' and to 'Helen,' and portions of the 'Genius of Solomon' are really finely written, and prove to the reader that Mr. Barlow has a true poetic gift, of an erotic, mystical description. We cannot say as much for 'The Rose of God's Blood,' and three sonnets classed with it, which are unnecessarily violent in language. 'In England's Name,' will be particularly jarring and unpleasant to English ears. We must take leave of Mr. Barlow, and in so doing advise him, while we cannot but acknowledge the genuine merit of the volume before us, to study moderation, and endeavour not to take away from the effect of his uncommon gifts, by un-called-for violence."—*Lloyd's News*.

"The author deserves all the praise he has received for pleasant versification, for mellifluousness of expression, for gentle thought and tender touching insight into the depth of a pure soul. If 'poets are all who love, who think great truths and tell them, and the truth of truths be love,' then Mr. Barlow is a poet of no mean order."—*British Quarterly Review*.

"Nine years ago there was published by John Camden Hotten a volume of verse entitled 'Poems and Sonnets'. The author, Mr.

George Barlow, was then an undergraduate at Exeter College, Oxford, and, with a modesty well becoming a beginner in literature, he chose for his motto the lines from Longfellow—

The rapture of pursuing
Is the prize the vanquished gain.

This present month Messrs. Remington and Co. publish a small volume of songs and sonnets under the title of 'Time's Whisperings'. This is the latest of Mr. Barlow's poetic efforts, and the interval of nine full years between the dates of his first and last works has witnessed the production of eight other volumes of verse, besides several essays and other prose treatises. It is a reasonable conjecture, therefore, that whatever else may be said for this author, it may fairly be claimed for him that he is one of the most voluminous writers of his time. The whole nine volumes are before us as we write, and after a careful and sympathetic perusal of this substantial outcome of perhaps the most important decade of an author's life, we cannot hesitate to say that if much has been attempted, much also has been done. When the first of them appeared, it was felt that, though Mr. Barlow's muse had some original power and a sympathy with certain subtle phases of nature which was neither assumed nor taken at second-hand, it was, nevertheless, a little too exuberant in power of imitation. It was seen that the author derived, then, some of his inspiration from Mr. Swinburne, whose impetuous passion and wholesome scorn for worn-out follies and superstitions were reflected in his work. There were those who said that under the sway of the poetic spirit of the day, and under influences which may, as it were, live in the air, and cause one man to resemble another without having read him, Mr. Barlow's volume belonged to the Rossetti subdivision amongst the works of the poets of the rising generation. This was a guess which came no nearer the truth than is usually the case where men judge of an author's manner after the hasty perusal of his work, which appears to be all that a newspaper critic in this age of countless books can give it. . . . Mr. Barlow's love of beauty was refining and elevating; tender and true and pure; and if his sonnets displayed as yet no giant craftsmanship they showed a large measure of skill in handling such as was conspicuously promising, and left it all but impossible to say what the author might do when he

had outgrown the occasional obscurity which marred his early work, when time had tempered the exuberance of a fancy which sometimes for brief lapses appeared to run away with its owner, and when judgment had curbed a facility of verse which was often damaging to artistic finish. The sequel shows that in Mr. Barlow's case the rôle of the poet was not undertaken lightly to be abandoned. Steadily, indeed sometimes impetuously, Mr. Barlow has pursued his chosen path in literature—which in its highest walks is ever as a jealous mistress who yields her best charms to those only who follow her with ardour and constancy. . . . During these first ten years of Mr. Barlow's poetic career it has not always been beside the mark to remind him (as we have ourselves done in these columns) that his love of beauty has sometimes seemed to carry him beyond that line at which spiritual passion degenerates into sensuality, and hence the Puritan eunuchs who, with a foulness of suggestion infinitely more reprehensible than his own most passionate expressions, have railed at his work, have probably not been without their uses to him in bringing him back to the chaster ideal proper to his mind. . . . Mr. Barlow's latest work is a distinct advance on previous efforts in purity and simplicity. It is altogether the most elevated and sustained flight of imagination this author has yet achieved. Its worst blemishes are due to that facility of production which Mr. Barlow may never properly restrain. Its highest excellences are the result of a keen poetic insight which weaves the facts of external nature into the web of imaginative story. Like certain of the great early Italian poets, Mr. Barlow sometimes uses love as a metaphor where philosophy and politics are meant. Like them too, he is sincere and beautiful where personal love is his undivided theme ; and if it is a daring thing to leash his name with theirs (and it is), it is also a fair assumption that out of the many hundreds of sonnets this author has written there are some that do not forbid the association and comparison."—*Liverpool Daily Courier*.

